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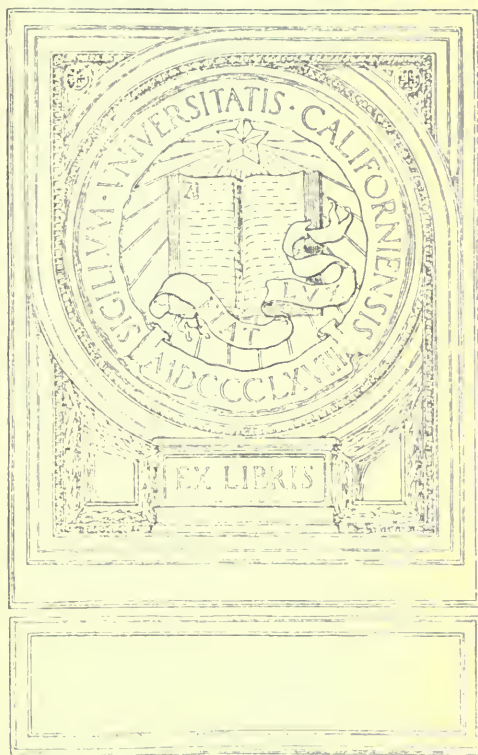
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# STRICTURES

ON THE

## LETTER

OF THE

RIGHT HON. Mr. BURKE,

ON THE

## REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.

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Hæc cùm loqueris, nos barones stupemus : tu videlicet tecum ipse vides.

*Cicer. de Fin. Bonor. et Malor. Lib. ii. cap. 23.*

—— Liberty cannot be preserved long by any people, who do not preserve that watchful and jealous *spirit* of Liberty, on the necessity of which I have insisted. If you are once convinced of this truth, you will know what opinion to entertain of those, who endeavour to extinguish this spirit, and of those, who do all they can to keep it alive.

*Bolingbroke, Rem. on the Hist. of Eng. Letter ii. p. 20.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for H. GARDNER, opposite St. Clement's Church,

8082

and, 1791.

The Reader is desired to take Notice, that where the Pages only are set down in the Margin, they refer to Mr. BURKE's Letter.

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# E R R A T A.

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HARDING

Page	line	
12	2	the note, for λαβοι, read λαβοι
14	14	for Socrates, read Isocrates
26	5	from bottom, for accompany, read accompanied
29	10	for heaven, read Heaven
—	15	for principal, read Principal
—	16	for his, read His
—	17	for his, read His
30	11	for des speculation, read de speculation
36	4	from bottom, for βασιλευιν, read βασιλευειν
43	10	from bottom for praeflantia, read praeflantior
49	3	for quosque, read quoque
59	ult.	for to be supported, read to be so supported
—	5	the note, for cisi, read cioè—and for dell' ministri, read delli ministri
—	6	the note, for quito, read questo.
61	3	the note, for subtile, read subtle
63	2	the note, after <i>riches</i> put a semicolon
—	6	the note, for eicelò, read eccitò
—	2	the note, from bottom, for traver, read haver
—	ult.	the note, for dopa read dopo
64	4	the note, for altra personne, read altre persone
—	4	the note, from bottom, for facundo, read facendo
—	3	the note, from bottom, for acresculi, read accrescerli
68	1	for κρηχθηναι, read κρηχθηναι
—	6	from bottom, for praeteribo, read praeteribo
—	4	from bottom, for consperit, read conspexit
69	16	for fencerim, read fencerim
71	4	from bottom, for concluded, read excluded
75	2	the note, from bottom, for face read fare
80	4	for institutions, read institution
—	11	for boast, read beast
—	13	for dolls, read dolts
82	5	for accomplishments, read accompaniments
87	4	from bottom, for durations, read deviations
88	4	for modules, read moduses
—	13	dele <i>con</i>
97	10	for acquora, read aequora
98	7	from bottom for princes, read Princes !
—	ult.	for dream, breaks, read dream, he breaks
101	11	for politesse, read petitesse
—	2	from bottom for misteries, read myteries
106		the note, after <i>Men</i> , insert “ by a Woman.”
118	12	for of, read off
124	7	dele the first <i>and</i> — line 9, for that, read the
—	4	from bottom, for lie, read be
126	3	the note, for danoro, read danaro
—	4	for die, read dei
—	5	for danoro, read danaro
—	6	for aneo, read anco
127	4	the note, for quantenque, read quantunque
—	13	for igni, read ogni
—	ult.	for rilener, read ritener
128	2	the note, for aureisculi, read accrescerli
—	6	for lecinio, read Licinio
129	1	for ottenue, read ottenne
—	2	for d'aleni, read d'alcuni
—	10	for gle, read gli
—	13	for cornuttione, read corruttione
—	14	for Poce, read Pochi
130	5	the note, for lilerici mufanti, read li Chierici mercanti
—	10	for Coro, read loro
132	9	for object, read objects
133	12	for signal, read signat
—	8	the note, for pumetello, read permettello

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## STRICTURES.

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**M**R. BURKE's letter, containing "Reflections on the Revolution in France, &c." had passed into the hands of the greater part of his readers, had, I believe, been answered by many, and probably was laid aside, before I could be prevailed on to give it a reading; nor would this at length have been complied with, but at the intercession of a friend, to whom I can refuse nothing. My reason for this coolness originated in having for some time past discovered, as I conceived, an evident defalcation in that gentleman's political principles, principles which did him honour, and gained him reputation as a speaker; the exchange he has made coincided not with my sentiments, and it was with reluctance that I yielded myself once more to be entangled in the sophistry of an ec-

centric genius levelled with such facility, and as it were for amusement played off against reason, and with his leave, the rights of men. His performance is long and tedious, or it might seem to partake of those qualities only to me, who am verging towards old age, and who found there among some matter useful and entertaining, much to condemn as revolting against *his* former sentiments, as well as my own. Impressed with this idea, though labouring under many disadvantages, and apprized that many able writers had answered that publication, yet I could not refrain from casting in my mite to obstruct, if not to stem, the ravages that some of those opinions might make on the minds of mankind; in doing this, I have adhered to my own feelings and sentiments, regardless of what may have been advanced by others. But before I proceed in this undertaking, I judge it necessary to profess my sincerity; that I am actuated by no private motive, that I have no pique or sinister view to promote, and that I engage in it from pure benevolence with the hope of promoting, though in a small degree, the happiness of my fellow creatures.

I must here premise, that controversy is for the most part not only unpleasant, but unprofitable;

able; it generally decides nothing. It is principally employed on abstract ideas, and the matter affirmed or denied concerning them, very rarely admits of unequivocal demonstration or proof. All controversy would be soon dispatched and determined, or rather there would be no cause for controversy, could we proceed in the like manner and with the same certainty as when discoursing on figures and lines. No person competent to the question doubts whether  $4 \times 4 = 16$ , or whether each angle of an equilateral triangle be equal to either of the other two; the reason is, that the term or figure 4 contains or represents in the opinion of all men conversant with it, one immutable invariable known quantity; this being immutably fixed, the rest follows of course; or if doubted, the proof might easily be adduced, for those who did not perceive it carried its proof along with it: and the like may be said of the angles of an equilateral triangle. But if men doubted, or were of different opinions concerning the quantity represented by the figure 4, some imputing to it a less, and some a greater quantity, from this uncertainty endless controversy would arise in discoursing concerning it, nor could it be adjusted till some fixed and determined quantity were appropriated to it by universal consent.

In discoursing therefore on abstract ideas from the want of such determination, controversies are not only multiplied, but they have no end. Logicians have in vain endeavoured to remedy this defect, by substituting definitions. No definition can be so constructed as to excite in the mind of another, that precise and clear perception of any abstract idea, nor indeed of any thing else, which every competent person entertains of the quantity represented by the figure 4, or by any other figure. Besides, in treating of abstract ideas, mankind are rarely agreed in the component parts; suppose virtue for example, some men impute to it more, some fewer qualities, others again different qualities, subtracting, retaining, or adding and modifying, ad infinitum, agreeably to their own conceits or opinions; so that unless all men were perfectly agreed in the definition, as precisely as they are in the quantity represented by the figure, the definition is useless, and consequently the controversy concerning virtue, or any other abstract idea, becomes endless, and undecisive. This uncertainty arising from deficiency of proof and demonstration attendant on abstraction, has, at different times, incited eccentric geniuses to start new and strange doctrines, or to revive and varnish up the old, not with a view to support

port the cause of truth and humanity, but to acquire to themselves celebrity and fame; and in case controversy should arise, they have always an asylum in the imbecility of human reason, destitute of those powers which are requisite to convince by infallible proof and demonstration. Hence so many opposite doctrines on the same points are seen subsisting in the world, and ever will be, for human reasonings are but judgments and opinions, often erroneous, and seldom or never supported by absolute proof and certainty; controversies, therefore, when settled, are determined by the preponderating weight or number of opinions; could they be concluded on principles of indubitable demonstration and proof, no controversy could subsist for a day; all erroneous reasonings, judgments and opinions, would instantaneously flee before this light of truth, and be consigned to darkness and permanent oblivion. Thus much is premised, that it may not be expected of me to advance nothing without proof, while Mr. B. has produced no proof, that I see, for any thing he has advanced. We have, indeed, his doubts, conjectures, inuendoes, half-explained wishes, desultory arguments, and false deductions and conclusions; but we have not even that authority which might have been  
obtained

obtained for many of the facts he mentions ; some of which, however boldly asserted, are extremely questionable. My age has rendered me too experienced to rely on the ipse dixit of any man where I can discover evident partiality, and he must pardon me if I do not give full credit to *all* he relates.

It gave me no small concern to observe a vein of acrimony pervade his whole letter, pointed directly against the Revolution in France, its authors and abettors, wherever to be found, without any regard to their moral characters or abilities ; the national assembly treated with indignant personalities ; and most of their operations and measures, without reserve or distinction condemned. The tone assumed, the enthusiastic emotions, the presumed knowledge, from a long study of men and things, with other extraneous and extravagant matter might command a smile or excite our pity. But when he presumptuously derides what is of the last importance, the execution of which is so vast as to defy all the powers of the human mind to accomplish at once, to make no allowance for human imbecility in what he conceives to be error, but to console himself in the future miscarriage of a plan concerted to restore twenty-five



five millions of the human species to freedom ; when we behold this unfriendly disposition, we are justified in questioning the purity of his candour, the validity of his assertions, the power of his assumed abilities, and to give him no longer credit for any more of these accomplishments and qualities, than are evidently stamped as his with the unerring seals of justice and truth.

Under what appellation we are to speak of the form of government established or establishing in France is immaterial ; it is however to be denominated a mixed form of government, its component parts are limited monarchy, and, as I apprehend, a timocracy. The latter is treated of by Aristotle in his Ethics, lib. viii. c. 10.

τρίτη δ' ἡ ἀπὸ τμημάτων, ἣν τιμοκρατίην λέγειν οἰκεῖον φαίνεται ;

it differs from a democracy which admits all the citizens to a share in government, but the timocracy such only as pay a tax or have an income ; the democracy respects *person*, the timocracy *person* and *property*. This mixed with a limited monarchy, is a form of government which I believe no where existed before ; but it is not to be condemned or censured on this account, for the same may be alleged of the mixed form of our English Government, the like

having never before existed in any nation, nor does it exist in any kingdom but our own, yet mankind are far from saying that it comes under the denomination of those forms of government which are accounted bad; nor will any but rash and conceited men condemn the other till they see the effect: all who do so, form their opinions on theoretical principles, on a subject which can only be determined by fact from experience. Of governments purely simple, judgment may be formed; but of new complex governments, of which we have had no experience, intemperance and folly alone would assume the wisdom of deciding and condemning. An aristocracy is generally considered by politicians as a vicious form of government; yet aristocracy properly blended and tempered with limited monarchy and democracy\* are the constituent parts of  
our

\* In what is above advanced concerning the English form of government, I rather complied with common opinion than adhered to my own, I should otherwise have said that the component parts of this mixed form of government are limited monarchy, an aristocracy, and a timocracy. I cannot think myself justified in this deviation from received opinions without giving my reasons. A part of what is termed democratic are the members of the House of Commons, yet no one of those is intitled to a seat in that House who is not possessed of land to a certain annual value, and this is purely timocratic; those

our form of Government. In a potion compounded of various ingredients one or more of them may be poisonous and deleterious, yet the whole medicine so compounded may nevertheless be salubrious, or one medicine may be so counteracted by another

those who elect a part of these members must be possessed of a *freehold* to a certain annual value, or which pays not less than a certain annual tax, this again is purely timocratic; they who elect the remaining part either derive their right from certain specified servitudes, and this is not democratic, or, are intitled to it from being inhabitants of particular descriptions in corporate towns, and this is not democratic; while by far the greater number of the people, such as mechanics in towns and villages and all the peasantry who have not served a proper share of servitude under freedmen, or have no freeholds to a certain annual amount, are totally excluded from enjoying any share in government, all of whom in a democracy would partake of it. This part then of our government usually termed democratic, for these reasons appears to me to be timocratic.

The whole taken together produces a form of government which on a comparison with others is esteemed good; but I presume far from perfect while the greater number of the people are totally excluded from any share in government; and it may be found very difficult hereafter even to preserve it in its original state however imperfect; for if even the aristocratic and timocratic bodies should become corrupt and resign their legislative power to the will of ministry, then would the executive and legislative power be vested in the same hands, and the government would become despotic, retaining the forms only of a mixed form of government.—Whether or not it be just to exclude the major part of the people from all share in government in this *democracy*, I say not, but it may be a subject not to be slighted by ministry.

another as when mixed to produce salutary effects: thus, though the form of government established in France should have one of its component parts vicious abstractedly, I say, should this be the case, not that I know or imagine it is, yet by the combination it may prove an excellent form of government, and replete with all that is requisite to produce public happiness. This, I say, *may* be the effect; I do not assert; nor would be so confident as those who arraign these legislators, their laws, their abilities, and what they have already organized, in terms which would excite in me a conscious degradation by exposing to contempt my presumption and weakness in the deciding on a subject which time and experience only can determine. Forms of government, the judicial alone excepted and which was known only to the Jews, are of human invention, the archetype has been supposed to be that of private families \*, be this as it may, civil government has been made to involve in it the most abstruse, profound, and consummate knowledge; the combinations are almost infinite;

\* See Aristotle's Ethics, lib. viii. cap. 10. Ομοιότητα δ' αὐτῶν καὶ οἷς παραδείγματα λαβὼν τις ἀνέκεινται τοῖς οὐκ αἰσίοις; and he afterwards, agreeably to this notion, compares the timocracy to a family of brothers. τὴν τιμοκρατικὴν δ' οἶκον ἢ τῶν ἀδελφῶν.

finite ; the tempers, the passions, the interests of mankind numerous and discordant ; to reconcile, soften, and blend all this heterogenous matter into one consistent, uniform, and beneficial system or whole, from whence supreme good shall be derived to all, is an undertaking replete with the most ardent difficulties. These increase when no archetype presents itself, and in this predicament are the French legislators ; for though their timocracy is extremely analogous to our own, yet the aristocratic form is totally excluded from their government ; nor could it be introduced with any degree of safety ; for though the form of government previous to the Revolution was despotic, yet in these nobles the people found almost as many petty tyrants ; their *hauteur*, their extorsions and severity had rendered them odious to the people, and their dispositions dangerous to freedom, so that they could not be introduced with safety to form a distinct class in their new form of government. Their exclusion by which their form of government becomes different from ours, renders it also a new form of government ; but I have no conception that any man so far from ridiculing what has been done, can determine with any degree of precision concerning its inefficacy. A government so formed may be  
bad,

bad, it may be a compound of good and bad, or it may be far superior to any yet experienced; but Mr. B. with all his philosophy and politics, with all his experience and knowledge, with all his meditations, reveries, and unremitting researches into men and things, will never be able to persuade me that he can form a more decisive opinion concerning the event than the generality of mankind. The so much boasted wisdom of man, so much applauded by man, and therefore no doubt impartial, what is it at best but plausible conjecture; and generally, removed but a few degrees from stark folly. Socrates who was very conversant in governments and their administration, and has left us two treatises expressly on these subjects, ingenuously confesses that so weak is his wisdom that he was unable to determine whether the treatise he was then writing would have any claim to merit; and that such doubts were very common to authors of every kind, who though they had laboured to rise to the dignity of their subject, yet whether they had properly acquitted themselves was uncertain till it was decided by public determination \*. If it was beyond the stretch

\* Καθ' ὅσον δὲ ἐπιτιμῶνται ἐν χεῖρὶ στοχαζέσθαι, καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν διατρίβειν, ἵνα περὶ αὐτῆς διαλέγηται. Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἴσται τὸ ὥρον  
 18-

stretch of the wisdom of such writers to determine with any precision on so trifling a matter as a small treatise, till it had undergone the examination of friends and had received the judgment of the public, I humbly conceive it is not within the range of Mr. B.'s knowledge, nor that of any other person, to decide on the merit and effect of this new form of government and the new code of laws yet in embryo; subjects far more abstruse from their nature, and requiring a larger portion of wisdom in proportion as the object is of more importance and magnitude than most others. But though the wisdom of man is, yet his presumption is not, limited. One of the wisest of his own species deriding his wisdom, says, it is something little better than nothing, *ἡ ἀνθρώπινη σοφία ολίγου τινοῦ ἀξία ἐστὶ καὶ οὐδένος\**. And the divine oracles frequently speak of man with all his collected wisdom as a conceited fool, unable to conduct himself, or to judge properly even in common occurrences.

ἐξεργασθῆναι ἀξίον τῆς ὑποδείξεως, χαλεπὸν ἀπο τῆς ἀρχῆς συνιδεῖν. Πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ἐμμετρῶν ποιημάτων, καὶ τῶν καταλογαδῶν συγγραμμάτων, ἐπὶ μὲν ἐν ταῖς διαταγαῖς, ὅσα τῶι συντιθέτων, μεγάλας προδοκίας παρεσχέν· ἐπιτελειοθέντα δὲ, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑποδειχθέντα, πολὺ καταδυστέρων τὴν δόξαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἐλάβεν.

Ifocrat. ad Nicoc. p. 38.

\* Socrat. Apol. Sect. 9. p. 73.

Proofs



Proofs of these assertions must strike every one who attends to the perpetual debates in certain assemblies, whose members unquestionably possess as much wisdom as is allotted to humanity, who, notwithstanding are almost constantly divided in their opinions on all questions of importance and difficult solution. The like too may be observed in most authors treating on the same subject, for their opinions are various. This I say could not happen if human wisdom were not precisely under the alleged predicament.

If from these legislative assemblies we go into our higher courts of law, where, if this wisdom existed, we might reasonably expect to see it assembled; yet here varying opinions are professed, uncertainty is firmly rooted, and doubts are started which these courts ingenuously declare they cannot resolve, the contested points are referred to the judgment of the twelve superior sages of the law, who are frequently divided in their opinions, and at length the determination is settled by counting of noses.

I am very far from endeavouring to convey the least reflection on any of the parties, I well know these consequences are inevitable; but I  
adduce



adduce such instances merely to prove, that when man extols his wisdom, he only boasts of his weakness; for if the legislators who promulgated those laws so framed them, that they were unintelligible, or doubtful in their meaning, this is no mark of their wisdom; if clear and intelligible, and yet the sages of the law do not comprehend them, then here again wisdom has nothing to boast; a deficiency must be somewhere, or every where, and our greatest wisdom will be, to acknowledge that human and divine oracles, which have ridiculed our high claims and presumption, are well founded, that we acquiesce in the sentence, and humbly submit to it, while such strong marks of human imbecility confront us, and might risk the danger of derision, were we to attempt a competition with the little chirping linnet, in the forming of a nest, wherein to breed her young.

To come nearer home, I mean to every man's own breast, experience, I presume, has convinced him, if he has ever engaged in any undertaking of consequence, either in art or science, that both in the design and progress of the work, he has repeatedly changed his mind, and altered his original mode of prosecuting his views, has made corrections, additions, sub-

tractions, and a variety of alterations of one kind or another, such as his mind did not suggest to him in the formation of his original plan. But this is not the characteristic of wisdom which designs perfectly, admits of no variation, and executes completely.

But to relinquish individuals, have we not observed two distinct legislative bodies of men, and in my estimation, possessing as much wisdom as any assembly of men existing, with the executive power at their head, repealing laws which they had before enacted, or altering, new-framing, retrenching, or adding to them on account of their imperfection, insufficiency, and of their being, in one or more respects, inadequate to the end proposed, and all this laboured circumspection at last totally frustrated and defeated; and this, surely not because they possessed a wisdom equal to the execution of their views, or that could inform them if those views could be executed, but because they were deficient in wisdom, which would have directed them to refrain from, or securely to have attained the end proposed. If these persons, high in estimation for their abilities, could not frame such laws without error, I presume the body of French legislators, who are forming a whole  
new

new code of laws for a great, rich, commercial, and spirited nation, are intitled, not to most malignant sneers and sarcastic coarse appellations, if they are supposed to have erred, but to the greatest indulgence, support, and assistance in their patriotic endeavours; while those who presume on their own weak abilities, and give the reigns to such license, would have acted more prudently in examining what has passed nearer home in concerns much less difficult, lest such sarcasms, by reverberation, should with redoubled force point there.

At the worst, if the legislators we are speaking of should have materially erred, not that I know or believe this to be the case, nor can any speculative visionary theorist prove it, being a fact which time and experience alone can reveal; but I say, supposing them to have erred in the formation of their government and some of its organizations, is this a subject for malevolent reproach? it is the work of men, and the wonder would have been, to have seen it without error; are these errors irrevocable? will they admit of no touches of emendation? are their decrees like those of the Medes and Persians, irreversible? may they neither rescind nor add? have they placed a bar to the exclusion

of all future melioration and improvement which time, experience, and circumstances shall suggest, till by adopting such alterations (which has ever been the invariable practice of every tolerable government, and in none so more than in our own) it is brought to the zenith of improvement and perfection? They certainly have not; if therefore they have erred, the avenues are open to amendment; what is it the most peevish or splenetic can require more? and if the means of improvement are to be found in the powers of human nature, I trust too they have abilities to discover, and the ingenuousness to employ them, having already given an ample earnest of their consummate philanthropy, in their noble efforts to redeem a nation from the two-fold bondage of superstition and slavery.

Prudence, therefore, I should have imagined would have dictated to Mr. B. if we old men could but pay half the attention to prudence which we do to our own prating, that it was derogatory to him, and indeed to any one not absorbed in the weakness and folly of age, to employ those ungenerous and unmanly terms of reproach, which at times are openly and covertly disseminated throughout his whole performance, against the greater part of the principal

pal authors of the French revolution and reform. But such reflections not only recoil on their author, they appear to me to reflect on the sense and spirit of our nation, if, when published, we do not disapprove, but sit down silently in a tame and mean acquiescence; for what a man is content to hear, he may be considered as doing, *α γαρ υπολαμνει ακουων, ταυτα και ποιειν δοκει\**. But as I choose not to be involved either in the language or censure, I here published my dissent and disapprobation of both: for were I to speak of them, I should consider each as a Proculcius, and say, in the language of Horace,

*Vivet extento Proculcius aëvo, .  
Notus in fratres animi paterni:  
Illum agat pennâ metuentes solvi  
Fama superstes.*

And I trust, from what I collect from my observation and the report of others, that a very considerable part of the people of this nation inclines to the like opinion, and if necessary, would avow it by their suffrages.

Prudence again, might have suggested to profound politicians; who have seen so much and meditated

\* Aristot. Eth. lib. iv. c. 8. p. 186.

meditated so long on men and things, the great impropriety or weakness in assuming an authoritative tone in deciding on the event, in cases so infinitely combined, intricate and abstruse, as are the greater part of those respecting new forms of government, and new codes of laws. In forming judgment on present things, the usual method is to recur to former precedents, these investigated and compared, we draw a conclusion for the present exigency, adhering to the axiom, like causes must produce like effects. The whole of such proceeding appears to me extremely erroneous, and particularly so in the present instance. Of the precedents or examples recurred to, and the cases with which they are compared, there is not one in a million that exactly corresponds; and the least failure in the most minute article may be, and generally is, fatal: and these differences and disagreements, multifarious as they are, either from their minuteness on the one hand, or from the deficiency of acuteness in human observation on the other, escape the keenness of the most assiduous penetration. That like causes will produce like effects, is a maxim which, either through misconception of its meaning, or misapplication of it, has been productive of more false reasoning and erroneous action, than per-

haps

haps any of those trite apothegms commonly bandied among mankind. All like causes will not have like effects, unless that which acts, and that which is acted upon, are in each case precisely similar. And this precision being wanting in innumerable instances where it is supposed to exist, and where it cannot be discovered but that it doth exist in every one of these instances, like causes will produce different effects, because the thing, for example, which is acted upon is not in the same precise state and condition in the one case, as in the other; the difference here again escaping human penetration. Thus, if a tax produced a specific sum, and like causes produced like effects, the tax, when doubled, should produce double the sum of the former tax; but legislators, who have adopted this theory, have been frequently disappointed, without having been able, with all their accuteness, to discover and foresee those remote and secret obstacles which frustrated their intentions.—

All such reasoning then is erroneous, but it is particularly so in the present case, for there is no precedent or example to direct us in our decisions; here is a form of government or constitution entirely new and unknown to the world before, with a new code of laws adapted to it; and I could wish these wise politicians who condemn their proceedings and determine, most probably

probably according to their own wishes, that the issue must be fatal, would, instead of giving us their decisive opinions, which no man of reason would estimate at more than a straw, I say, I wish they would tell us on what principles of sound reasoning they ground their confidence, on what infallible criterion they found their judgment. For my own part, I am persuaded they have none; and that they slide along with the rest of mankind on the slippery surface of conjecture only; that they are as wise as their neighbours who hold a contrary opinion, but not one iota wiser.

But their finances, they tell us, are totally deranged; and what of that? is it not the natural consequence of such a revolution? and if a person has the tooth-ach, it may derange him, but it does not necessarily follow that he must die of the pain. But they are miserable financiers, and understand nothing of the matter; improbable, incredible as this is, let us suppose it on the word and the wisdom of those who pretend to be so much wiser, and this admitted, will any one assure us that they are so dull a people, that they are incapable of learning from experience, what experience alone can instruct and inform? The former unequal and partial  
taxation



taxation can no longer be continued under the present form of government, which professes to deal impartially with all its citizens; of course then new taxes must be exacted, and new laws enacted, to declare what they are, and the mode of raising them; in this very comprehensive and intricate concern, should some mistakes appear, it is no more than what every reasonable person would expect; present derangement will be succeeded by future arrangement; time and experience, in the hands of œconomy and integrity, will adjust the whole: in the calm of the state, which will succeed this little tempest, there will be opportunity to revise what is amiss, and to apply the needful repairs, till the whole is compleat. But no rational being can suppose that a few erroneous calculations, or mistaken objects of taxation, can ruin a nation. A present temporary, transient, slight distress is one thing, total ruin is another; but I have no conception that a kingdom, containing twenty-five millions of industrious, active, intelligent, and commercial inhabitants, who have cast off the yoke of despotism, and occupy near three hundred thousand square miles of territory, chiefly fertile, can be ruined by such petty mistakes. If immersed for a moment in difficulties, it must soon emerge and rise

D

superior

superior to them; the powers to effect this are at hand; they are present and innate, and the operation as natural as any other in nature. Were they even great, alarming, and imminent, still there is redress, and this without recurring to the dark magic of deep financiers, to convey the reluctant property of the nation into their own hands—the people alone can effect it; and will cheerfully do so, if they entertain an adequate idea of the blessings derived to them by these their deliverers. It is a tribute which they cannot in reason or justice withhold, for if Freedom could not be obtained at an easier rate, still it would be a cheap purchase, if the price was the last shilling in the nation.

To assail our passions, not to appeal to our reason and judgment, the writer furnishes us with lamentable pictures of private sufferings. Who, in a Revolution, does not expect to hear of some distress? who sits down to see a tragedy represented, and condemns the piece because there are tragical scenes? It cannot be expected of all revolutions, that they should be attended with that gentle ebb and flow which accompany that of our own country, and perhaps there are those who would not wish it, lest they should become more frequent. In this French Revolution, considering the numbers concerned, and  
the

the opposing interests, it is almost miraculous, that it should be attended with so few which do violence to humanity. Let the reader who has leisure and patience, consult Davila's history of a former attempt only at a Revolution in that kingdom; let him compare those scenes of slaughter, havoc, disolation, and assassination, which continued for years, with the evils which have attended this Revolution, and he will be astonished to find, that though so much has been effected, yet the consequent calamities, on a comparison, do not so much as merit attention. The former was as a storm, raging and durable, in which the furious conflicting powers tore up every thing, scattered ruin around, leaving nothing behind them but the deadly traces of devastation; the latter as a transient gale, of some force but of short duration, which deprived the lofty trees of their leafy honours, and shook down graceless spires of bad architecture, which had been too highly elevated. This has supplied one grand theme for oratory, and your great orators have a licence to blow the soapy suds of trifles into transparent bladders of magnitude, *Επειδὴ οὗτοι λόγοι τριαιτὴν ἔχουσι τὴν φύσιν, ὡς δ' οἶον τῆσαι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐξηγησασθαι, καὶ τὰ τε μέγιστα ταπεινά τ' ἰσσοῖ, καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς μεγέθος προσθεῖναι\**, says Isocrates.

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At

\* Isocrat. Pan. p. 99-100.

At one time by heightening the tints in their representations, at other times daubing them with a false glare of colouring, and working in a plenty of the pathos, our oratorical gentlemen expect to do wonders. But this game has been played off so frequently upon us; the keys of our sensibility have been so repeatedly struck, and with such injudicious violence, that I apprehend the rest of mankind, as well as myself, are callous and deaf to all they say, and pay no more attention to them than

*Furius ebrius olim,  
Cum Ilionam edormit, Catienis mille ducentis,  
Mater te appello, Glamantibus.*

Hor. lib. ii. sat. 3. v. 60.

Who does not perceive that this oratory is nothing more than the skill of playing on the ignorance of mankind, and when duped, to lead them captive, right or wrong, to the interest or opinion of the orator; that it is the rattle-snake in society, and fascinates to catch its prey.—With these notions, Mr. B. will pardon me, if in perusing his letter, I sometimes smile where he might expect a tear, and again shed a tear where he might expect a laugh. Not that I cannot feel for the distress of a king, if the dis-

tress

trefs be real, for in that case, I should be as much affected as this writer or any other; but I cannot feel for an imaginary distress, where there is none, and no cause for it exists. If the distress be real, I feel for him as a man, though not as a king, unless by virtuous actions he has stamped that character with singular merit corresponding to that dignity. Of such personages it is said, that they obtain their high office and power by the special favour of heaven; I really am not competent to decide in this matter; but if that be true, it appears to me, that when they lose them, that they lose them also by and with the consent and approbation of the same all-ruling principal, for I am certain such change cannot take place contrary to his will, nor in opposition to his eternal decrees. But such dignities and powers, considered by themselves, are mere gewgaws, and he who laments at being divested of them, if he means to lament as a man, can only lament that he is thereby deprived of the means of being more extensively beneficent; and here I sympathize with him. I profess to know little of kings and courts; from the little knowledge, however, which I have of them, it may be deemed a wonderful escape, if the former are not completely contaminated by the latter; it would be almost as miraculous for a

person

person to pass through the fire unhurt, as to reside in a court and retain his probity, if the following nervous and animated representation bears a resemblance of the originals; for in this picture we see collected and grouped all the meanest vices of human nature masked; *Qu'en lise, says Montesquieu, ce que les historiens de tous les tems ont dit sur la cour des Monarques; qu'on se rappelle les conversations des hommes de tous les pays sur le misérable caractère des courtisans; ce ne sont point des choses de speculation, mais d'une triste expérience. L'ambition, dans l'oïveté, la bassesse dans l'orgueil, le desir de s'enrichir sans travail, l'aversion pour la vérité; la flatterie, la trahison, la perfidie, l'abandon de tous ses engagements, le mépris des devoirs du citoyen, la crainte de la vertu du prince, l'esperance de ses faiblesses, et plus que tout cela, le ridicule perpetuel jeté sur la vertu, sont, jecrois, le caractère de la plupart des courtisans marqué dans tous les lieux et dans tous les tems. Or il est très mal-aisé que les princepeaux d'un état soient malhonnêtes gens, et que les inferieurs soient gens-de-bien, que ceux là soient trompeurs, et que ceux-ci consentent à n'être que dupes\**. There was not perhaps a court in Europe more strongly impregnated with the baseness, vice, and infamy

above

\* Montesquieu, *Ésp. de Loix*, liv. iii. ch. 5.

above described, than that of France, before the Revolution, and which, it is to be hoped, the Revolution has done away. No man of integrity can conceive himself distressed in being released and rescued from such company, or in resigning a despotic power, which gave life, soul, and energy to such iniquity. I was never guilty of flattering sovereigns, but if I am not greatly misinformed, a better intentioned man doth not exist than Louis the Sixteenth king of France. To suppose him distressed, argues a want of knowledge of his character and merit. So far from exciting our concern or sympathy, he has unequivocally demonstrated to the world, that the greatness of his soul, on the present occasion, soars far above all praise, that his magnanimity and heroism are so transcendently exalted that men lose sight of it, or will not comprehend it. He has voluntarily declared in public acts, when no necessity induced him to make such declaration, that he implicitly confides in the National Assembly, approves of the form of government they have established, and has taken an oath to support and defend it. He has wisely considered, though it militates against the creed of courtiers, that the end proposed in civil society is civil happiness, that the foundation of this is freedom, that public freedom is

founded

founded on public virtue, that public virtue can never flourish where the corrupt example of the great is vicious, and that their vices are cherished and fostered by despotism: he therefore cheerfully relinquishes this odious, illicit, and unjust power in favour of the people, that they may become virtuous, free, and happy.

Yet this is the character on which it has been endeavoured to draw down our commiseration\*. I profess to look up to it with applause and admiration, *Ecce spectaculum dignum, ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo Deus! Ecce par Deo dignum!*† This is true heroism, and if I must with Mr. B. look up to sovereigns‡ with that awful respect and veneration, it shall be to such only as possess and exert this heroism. There are two species of heroism, the specious and the genuine. The former was appropriated in barbarous ages to acts which they supposed to be virtuous. A hero was a person who was successful in battle, though the grounds on which he undertook the war were unjust; and the appellation was given indiscriminately to all who laid countries desolate, overturned cities and towns, and fertilized the land with deluges of human blood,

\* P. 99. † Seneca de Divin. Prov. ‡ P. 128.



blood, proudly and despotically trampling on the peace and rights of mankind, as it were, in contempt of human nature. But who, in these enlightened times and days, as we boast, of civilization, does not consider Alexander, and the rest of that tribe of heroes, as objects of horror and indignation; every rational being must detest the despotic power they assumed, the hands in which it was entrusted, and the use to which it was applied. But the other species of heroism, which I term genuine, is of a very different complexion; it is founded on benevolence, it consists in every possible exertion in every station to promote the happiness of the whole human race. We cannot compare the characters of Alexander and Trajan without injury to the latter, and suppressing the feelings of humanity in our own breasts. What are the trappings of sovereignty compared with the happiness of millions? what is haughty despotism compared with filial affection? what are stern corrosive commands compared with voluntary obedience and cheerful resignation, if necessity should press, of fortune and life? The despot ungenerously consoles himself in grasping the former; the hero of benevolence assuredly secures to himself the other. The despot, if not insensible, has but a pitiable existence amidst

false splendor, attended with suspicions, treasons, tumults, fears and alarms : the other knows no anxiety ; and conscious self-approbation, the most enlivening cordial of life in sickness and in health, is ever present to invigorate his mind. To embrace this, despots might willingly resign their baubles of sceptres, relinquish their false flattering courtiers, and all the mockery and lumber of courts : both cannot be held together, and he that will be a hero must make large sacrifices, by voluntary resignation of what the folly of vanity terms great and good. This the king of France has wisely done, and adheres to it in despite of the solicitations of pretended friends and courtiers, who wish to resume their tyranny under his sanction and patronage : but he has made the better choice, by attending to the one thing needful, the prayer and prosperity of the people ; and in spite of all misrepresentation, he has acted the part of true heroism. will be applauded by all the friends of mankind, and will meet with that consolation in life and in death, which he could not expect while he grasped and exercised the former powers of despotism. He may now appropriate to himself that motto which few can claim, and no despot can assume—*Ni confire tibi, nullaue palefcere culpa.*

Thus

Thus has Louis the Sixteenth taken the most solid ground to rise in the annals of fame, by this honourable sacrifice to the happiness of his people; this will be his consolation under every affliction to his last moment; and when it shall be said of other princes, that they just lived and died, or, *proh pudor*, that they scattered devastation and ruin, the candid historian will rank him with the Antonius's and Trajans, and the rest of those princes who pursued true heroism through the path of beneficence, whose lustre, though bright, he will eclipse, and whose glories, however great, will on the comparison, "hide their diminished heads."

There are in the world those who affect heroism, but the path they pursue leads not to it; they have neither the magnanimity nor the bounty to urge them to make the necessary sacrifice; the sublime heroic character is not to be purchased at a vile price, they must bid high who wish to obtain it, and bring with them their testimonials of temperance and self-denial. In an elevated and highly exalted sphere, I recollect but two heroes at present in the world, Louis the Sixteenth, who relinquished his pomp and power to make his people happy, and Washington, who after a long and desperate contest,

which he gloriously maintained in support of the rights and liberties of his fellow-citizens, no sooner became victorious, than he retired from the head of the army he commanded, and which he might have employed to the purposes of ambition, and content with the sole reward which self-consciousness bestows on heroic actions, sought repose in the calm of rural retirement.

Mr. B. speaking of the former government of France, thinks that it was not so very bad;\* in support of this opinion, he lays some stress on the population of that country. Population appears to me to settle one point, which is, that the government had not cut off, or sent into exile a great part of its inhabitants. Though the government of Persia was highly despotic, yet was the country full of inhabitants. Climate, diet, employment, and a thousand other contingencies affect population in general more than government. Isocrates makes the criterion of good government to be the wealth and wisdom of its subjects, Σημεῖον ἐστί σοι τοῦ καλῶς βασιλεῖν εἶναι τοὺς ἀρχομένους ὅρας εὐποροτέρους καὶ σωφρονιστοτέρους γινόμενους διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπιμελείαν†. To form our judgment from this test, the government was bad, since in so deplorable

\* P. 187, &c. † Isoc. ad Nicœ. p. 50.

plorable a situation were the finances of the kingdom, that a convention of the states was reluctantly assembled to ward off the impending danger of a national bankruptcy. It may be asked, Did the people of France, under this government, enjoy their liberty, life, and property in as full and ample a manner, as of right they ought to do, and would have done under a just, wise, and equal government, and to which all men are entitled, being the real purposes for which they enter into civil society? To this, any man of plain sense can answer, that they neither did, nor could; the government was despotic both in theory and practice. The Bastile was the inquisition-prison of the civil power. Any person, at the nod of the king, the minister, or any minion, or of any of their mistresses, might be suddenly seized, and conveyed thither, snatched from his wife and family, innocent or guilty, and at the pleasure and caprice of him who sent him, uncondemned and even unheard, might be dragged to the torture-chamber, provided expressly for that purpose, and there repeatedly undergo every torture of an inquisition; if a more favourable fate awaited him, he is conveyed to a dungeon, to remain in solitude and sullen darkness, just tinged with as much light as may discover to him

him the wretchedness of his situation, and make him long for light and liberty, deprived of which, he there remains fed on a scanty allowance of mouldy bread and foul water, till these combined evils close a lingering life and miserable existence. But if a still more fortunate fate attended him, and which some enjoyed under the relentless cruelty of this government, it was to be immediately murdered on coming within the walls. Thus, while the court rioted in luxury, government let loose the reins of cruelty, *adeo nec luxuriae quidquam crudelitas, nec crudelitati luxuria obetat*\*.

Insurrections, revolutions, war, and whatever has a tendency to waste human blood, or to destroy the peace of society, stand foremost in the list of my aversions,

*O pater et rex*

*Jupiter, ut pereat positum rubigine telum,*

*Nec quisquam noceat cupido mihi pacis —*

Hor. lib. ii. sat. 1. v. 42.

Yet all the sophistry of declaimers will never be able to persuade me that all the aggravated distresses, from the king to the cottage, which have  
been

\* Quint. Curt. lib. 10. sub fine.

been so pathetically lamented, were not advantageously commuted in the extirpation of this hydra of power, and the government so weak and wicked as to tolerate it; a power awfully cruel to the subject, degrading to humanity, and stamping ignominy on national character. But it is asked\*, comparing this government to some old castle, or other edifice, “ if the walls could “ not be repaired ? ” no doubt any building may be repaired, the question may be, is it worth the repairing; the gutting old houses and buttressing the walls, are wretched shifts; and most who have engaged in the undertaking, if they valued convenience, safety, and elegance, have repented of the folly: if men want only a temporary retreat, and their finances are low, they must manage as they can; but this is not the case in forming governments; they are made for duration, and there are always plenty of materials; the only thing wanting, is to put them well together, upon a well concerted plan, and such as will admit of alteration and addition without injury to the edifice, in case any thing has been omitted. Corruption, despotism, and other vicious qualities had not only completely sapped the foundations of the ancient fabric, but  
had

had rotted most of the materials, so that they became useless in their present form, and a new edifice was necessary; thus at least thought the political architects of France, or they would not have removed it as a nuisance. This was their business, and why they are not as competent to it as Mr. B. or even more so, I profess not to understand; and after all, he could not be interested in it so deeply, as to justify those terms of reproach which he so plentifully pours forth from the vial of wrath, on the members of their national assembly\*. But the Bastille was not the only grievance in the old government, among others, was the despotic power of raising monies† on the subject at pleasure, contrary to the known rights of the people. If I mistake not, Mr. B. supported a similar plea of the Americans, which terminated not only in a revolution, but in a total subversion of government, and loss of that country to Great Britain, after a contest, which cost one hundred and fifty millions, and an hundred thousand lives. And yet it is to be remembered, that even the bit-

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\* Pages 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 59, 61, 85, 86, 100, &c. &c.

† In the "Address to the National Assembly," Appendix, N° III. p. 42, it is said, "It is also an acknowledged principle, that the French cannot be taxed without their own consent."



terest enemies of America never thought of introducing among them a power like that of the Bastile, but the despotic power only of taxation, a despotic power over property, not over life and limb : and grim as this power might be, yet was it a rose-lipped seraph, compared with that other hideous demon ; but under the old government, France had both to struggle with ; it was in fact a despotic power over life, liberty and property. A government thoroughly tainted with these vices, assuming over man a power which *he* rarely will assume, and which no person of humanity will exert, in its utmost limit, over beasts, one would imagine could not be worth the patching and preserving ; and I must confess, without being in any wise interested, and only giving it as a matter of opinion, such a government is better done away.

The power over life, I do not mean that capricious power we have been treating of, but a power solemnized by law and judicial proceedings, however cautious and merciful, is a very serious concern ; and I scruple not to say, that no set of men, forming themselves into civil society can, in their compact, make over that power to another, or to government. No one can convey to another a greater right or interest

in any thing than what he himself possesses. No man has power over his own life, he has it only in trust from Heaven, the sole disposer of life and death. Therefore, when men enter into civil society and compact, they cannot make over to government a power over their own lives, because that is a power they never possessed. The conditions of such a compact would be null and void. I will not enquire into the generally assumed authority of governments over the lives of their subjects; but it seems extremely clear to me, that no such power in man over man exists, nor can be exercised in any case, where there is not an express sanction for it in the laws of GOD. The powers exercised in all governments must be in subordination to the laws of God, they cannot run counter, or rise superior to them.

To whatever crimes the laws of God have annexed death, the civil magistrate acts in subordination to them, and by them is justified when he inflicts that punishment for those crimes. But to proceed a step further, appears to me extremely dangerous, because it is in fact saying, that though the laws of God have declared what crimes shall be punishable with death, yet I also by my authority will point out other crimes,

crimes, and accordingly inflict death on those who are guilty of them. If magistrates imagine they have such a power they would act prudently in examining with the greatest circumspection from whence they derive it. But if it be only doubtful if such a power rightfully exists in any government, yet that capricious licence usurped in France must be acknowledged on all hands to be hideous, and to defeat the very end of civil society; for all modern governments are human institutions; they are instituted by man for the benefit of man, and the benefit proposed is the general happiness. *Homo, cui felicitas in civili disciplina ordinata est, ut cujus gratia ordinata est, ut est felicitas, cujus gratia tota civilis disciplina ordinata est, et instituta tota virtutum explicatio*——*Semper autem finis, cui res ordinata est, ceteris omnibus finibus praestantia existit.* A government therefore so extremely vitiated as to be able to admit into it such a depravity, must be wholly contaminated; and, coute qui coute, equally merits to be destroyed and extirpated, with the foulest murderer: for though the plague of political leprosy were most apparent in the blotches of the Bastile, yet all the other parts were affected and incurable; without such a general corruption, the sources of

their finances could not have been so effectually exhausted and dried up.

On the articles Religion and Priesthood, though I am neither Papist nor Dissenter, Mr. B.'s sentiments and mine are by no means in unison, or rather we differ *toto coelo*. To reply to all he has said on these subjects I conceive would be a waste of time, few persons standing in need of information, or joining in the same opinions with him, although what he has advanced is ushered in under the pompous patronage of WE, as though he were supported in his opinions by the unanimous voice of the whole nation. He says\*, " I beg leave to speak of  
 " our church establishment which is the first of  
 " our prejudices, not a prejudice destitute of  
 " reason, but involving in it profound and ex-  
 " tensive reason." With regard to church establishments in general, they might be justifiable on the supposition that the magistrate was endowed with wisdom from above, to enable him unequivocally to discriminate which is the most perfect religious profession. But as in all countries, and in every country where the Christian religion is professed, mankind are divided in  
 their

\* P. 136.

their opinions on this point, and will not be induced by gentle or harsh means to renounce their opinions and embrace any other, and as the magistrate is incompetent to decide on the question, being as blind as the rest, the consequence is, that if he establishes a religion for the people which they are to follow, the people must necessarily follow a blind guide.—Religion is intimately connected with conscience, and principally respects a future state. The parties concerned are the person, his conscience and heaven. I see not how another party can intrude, so long as the person disturbs not the harmony of society. To appoint him a religion, command him to embrace it, or in case of refusal to exclude him from certain privileges in society, appears to me unreasonable, partial, and arbitrary; and this too in a case where the magistrate has no right to interfere, and in which he possesses no knowledge superior to that of those whom he affects to direct.—I shrink not from declaring openly, though I do so with concern and regret, that in my opinion, genuine practical religion is much on the decline; of theory, farcical shew, pomp, and parade, there is certainly enough, and perhaps too much, but of practice there is a great deficiency, we grasp at the shadow but relinquish the substance.—

Without

Without entering into an examination of the combined and multifarious minuter reasons for this retrograde motion, it shall be ingenuously confessed, that I look upon establishments as the grand original cause. It is here, that on examining from the highest down to the lowest officer, excepting only the industrious beneficed clergyman who resides on his single living, and the labouring curate who performs all the drudgery, that we are struck with perpetual examples of indolence, luxury, and pomp; we may see them ardently pursuing every amusement, gratification, or employment but the true one, that to which they were appointed, and for which they are paid. This evil, in this modified ministry of the gospel, has its root in the fertile soil of establishment only; if men were to pay their pastors by voluntary contribution, they would as in all other cases, see that they performed their duty for the pay (which is a rule that those who object to this restraint immutably practise with respect to others) and if the ministry be beneficial to the cause of religion, religion would be benefited by such ministry: but in establishment, the case is reversed; and I leave the candid disinterested public to determine from what is daily before them, whether

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an establishment be the mean of sincerely promoting the true interests of religion. I scruple not therefore to avow that I am no abettor of establishments, but support that every one should be left to choose his own religion and pastor, and to requite him as he deserves; and that the civil power should equally and impartially protect every sect, and punish only such as are refractory and destroy the public peace. To me it is truly ludicrous to suppose that the civil power is more anxious for my present and future welfare than I am myself; on this supposition it should also appoint me my apothecary, surgeon, and physician, as well as my priest.

In our church establishment all its officers, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the curate, are as much the creatures of the civil power as the petty constables. They cannot alter by adding to, or omitting any part of the service, they cannot introduce a prayer as from themselves, nor otherwise do any thing that is not appointed, or ordered them by the civil power. Such is the opinion entertained of them by the civil power, that it will not permit them to transgress in a single word from what it has prescribed

prescribed throughout the whole service. Yet under this disadvantage, I might have said the many contingent disadvantages attendant on this restraint, we see them in their various orders move heaven and earth to get preferment, so that though it is possible, setting aside this hope, “ that their hope should be full of immortality,” as Mr. B. says\*, yet I do not comprehend how “ they should not look to the paltry pelf of the “ moment,”† as this seems to be the principal, if not the sole motive for their engaging in that office : meanwhile government appears to me to resemble a person who squints, looking one way and seeing another, supporting an establishment under the appearance of religious benefit, while the true object to which it is directed is the strengthening its own power, by its numerous dependents and expectants of mitres, lordships, palaces, and the variety of honours, accompanied with rich emoluments in its gift, all which are considered as pensions or life estates ; and this, if the words imply any thing, is “ the consecration of the state, by a state religious establishment.‡ ” *Quàm multa isti homines vident in umbris et in lucis quae nos non videmus !* § or is he tormented with the restless spirit of novelty which

\* P. 137. † P. 136. ‡ P. 137. § Cicero.



which furnishes him with ideal wings, to raise him above common conceptions,

——— *Tentanda via est, quâ me quosque possim  
Tollere humo ; \**

to soar we know not whither ; for after all, as Ovid observes,

——— *Quid tentare nocebit ? †*

We are told, “ They can see without pain, “ or grudging an archbishop precede a duke.” ‡ I hope Mr. B.’s French friend, to whom he is giving all this wonderful information, and that which follows, understands that he is speaking only of England, not Great Britain, as the kingdom of Scotland knows nothing of archbishops and bishops, and bless their stars, that they are not like asses, loaded with such inhuman burthens. As Mr. B. has not let his friend into the secret, why the people of England “ can see “ without pain or grudging an archbishop precede a duke,” I will beg leave to do it for him ; it is simply this, that they care not a fig about the matter. Whether this precedes, or that hangs upon the rump of the other, interests them no more than who danced first and last at

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a court

\* Virg. Geor. iii. v. 9. † Ovid. Met. lib. ii. ‡ P. 154.

a court ball. I know they are too wise, and I am certain they are engaged in more important concerns, than to attend to such fooleries. But the duke, who may conceive himself more nearly interested, may also perhaps smile with a sneer of ineffable contempt at the ignorance and stupid bigotry of the age in which this etiquette was established.—The explanation is, the bishop of Rome, as pope, is both bishop and prince ; by fraud and artifice on one hand, working on superstition and ignorance on the other, he exalted himself superior to all his brother princes ; so the archbishop following the precedent, also raised himself paramount above all his brother peers. Neither of these precedents, it is true, is to be found in the acts of the apostles, and by some mistake or other it was omitted in the four gospels, yet certainly there is great merit in that ingenuity which supplied these defects. Yet I entertain some doubt if the laity were at this time to make a compact with the clergy, whether this and many other things would be exactly as they are. If any reformation should take place, I beg humbly to recommend, and I suppose it could be effected on Mr. B.'s interest, that as the bishops only “ raised their mitred fronts in  
“ courts

"courts and parliaments"\*, that the archbishops, both of them, should have theirs adorned with a *double* mitre; his holiness at Rome has three, though it must be confessed the tiara has lost something of its original splendor, since the cloud of ignorance has been dissipated, and bigotry in some measure expelled the world.

Mr. B.'s friend is again informed that the people of England, not the people of Scotland who are not blessed with an archbishop or bishop in all their kingdom, and consequently are in a perilous and desponding state in civil and religious concerns for want of such an establishment; I say, he is informed that the people of England "can see a bishop of Durham, or a  
"bishop of Winchester, in possession of ten thou-  
"sand pounds a year; and cannot conceive why  
"it is in worse hands, than estates to the like  
"amount in the hands of this earl, or that  
"squire.†" If Mr. B. does not mean to deceive his friend, as I would persuade myself he does not, then the true meaning of the passage is this: Why is not this or that bishop as justly entitled from his merit or office to the possession of estates to the amount of ten thousand pounds a  
G 2 year

\* P. 153.      † P. 154.

year as this earl, or that squire. Mr. B. has been very cautious and circumspect in his terms, but if that is not the sense he would convey, and that he means simply to say without regard to contingencies, that such estates are as properly disposed of when in the hands of A. and B. as when in those of C. and D. then we are losing our time in contending about nothing. But if what I have supposed to be, is his real meaning, then this shadow vanishes and we may grapple with the substance. Immediately preceding the passage I have cited, Mr. B. treating of these same persons says, “ that acquired personal nobility, which they intend always to be, and “ which often is the fruit, not the reward (for “ what can be the reward?) of learning, piety, “ and virtue.” From whence we may conclude that personal nobility, together with immense estates, are bestowed on them, if not as the reward, yet as the *fruit* of their learning, piety, and virtue. I will quarrel with no man about whether these are fruits or rewards, nor will they, I apprehend, so long as they can secure them; but if they claim under the title of learning, piety, and virtue, methinks the title should *always* be clear, and not *often*, and that they should *never* be disposed of to a claimant under a false title. I have already in the beginning of this  
essay

essay declared my opinion concerning human wisdom or learning, and therefore shall not repeat it here; and as to piety (of which I consider virtue as a part) I am very ready to admit with Mr. B. that it is rather a rare commodity; and commodities certainly rise in their price in proportion to their scarcity and the demand for them. But dear Mr. B. for a questionable piety, as neither you nor any man can discriminate its sincerity, would you think of granting, if not as a *reward* yet as a *fruit*, the title of nobility with an estate of ten thousand pounds a year? If piety bears such fruit botanists will be at a loss where to class it, and it must rank alone under the name of the tree of knowledge of worldly good and evil, and will soon be propagated in every part by hypocritical knaves in this our paradise of fools.—Genuine piety is no cripple, therefore does not stand in need of the crutch of nobility on one side, nor that of immense riches on the other for her support; in her journey to Heaven, these, and especially the latter, would be an impediment, an obstruction, and cause of her stumbling, if we may believe divine oracles \* in  
 preference

\* Matt. ch. ix. v. 23.—Mark, ch. x. v. 25.—  
 Luke, ch. xviii. v. 25.

preference to Mr. B. and what if I should doubt if genuine piety ought to accept them either as a reward or fruit! Mr. B. quotes Fenelon once if not oftener, and I will take the example; in his life of Socrates he remarks, *Aussi Socrate avoit-il coutume de dire, qu'il ne concevoit pas comment un homme qui feroit profession d'enseigner la vertu, pouvoit songer à en tirer quelque profit: comme si de s'acquérir un honnête homme, et de se faire un bon ami de son disciple, n'étoit pas le plus riche avantage et le profit le plus solide qu'on pût retirer de ses soins\**. In another place he says of him, *Il étoit pauvre, mais si content de sa pauvreté, que, quoiqu'il ne tint qu'à lui d'être riche en acceptant les presens que ses amis et ses disciples vouloient le forcer de recevoir, il les renvoya toujours au grand déplaisir de sa femme, qui ne goutoit point du tout cette philosophie†*. Yet Socrates was but a heathen with all this self-denial. We are also acquainted with the temperance of the apostles, and some of the first pastors of the primitive church. Men of understanding must smile at the sophistry employed on similar occasions‡ when the question is artfully turned on the complainant by asking him, do not you act after the like manner? for this is  
no

\* Fenelon, Vie de Socrate, p. 121. † Fenelon, Vie de Socrate, p. 123, 124. ‡ P. 155.

no more than endeavouring to justify one thing that is wrong, by another; while the point turns simply upon this, is the matter in question right or wrong, and not upon who and who acts so and so: and agreeably to that sophistry when we receive instructions from the pulpit which the instructors themselves do not practise, we must “think them cheats and deceivers”;\* a conclusion in which however I presume Mr. B. will not agree.

But I am so weak as to imagine, that when an injunction is laid by Heaven on the preachers of the gospel, such injunction is to be obeyed till the law is repealed, and this without regard to time, place, or any circumstances that may arise in the world;† for if the commands of Heaven were to be made to vary with human changes, alterations and institutions, under this control it would be man in effect who made the law and not God. Thus on the supposition that more luxury were introduced into the world than was practised at the first preaching of the gospel, does it follow therefore that the preacher is to be enriched and the commands of Heaven relaxed to enable him to engage in those luxuries

\* P. 155, 156.      † P. 155.

ries which the gospel condemns. For this must be their supposition when they tell us the preacher's emoluments are to vary with the times, manners and customs. There was however as much luxury in the world at the time of the first preaching of the gospel as there is now; Rome, Antioch, Athens, Jerusalem, Alexandra, Ephesus, and many other great and opulent cities can witness it; but from all such corruptions the preachers were to turn aside, keeping themselves pure and undefiled, not only on their own account, but for the sake of example to others.—That it was never intended the preachers of the gospel should enrich themselves by the gospel, because if it had such a provision would have been appointed them, whereas the appointment is the reverse; and had it been the intention of Christ that they should be enriched, such appointment would have been made to the Apostles as having the best claim not only on account of their great industry which was indefatigable and hazardous, but also because they preached that which at that time could not be known but by their means: whereas now in these kingdoms at least, every man may know the gospel, if he can but read, at a very trifling expence.—That the new fangled doctrine by which some would endeavour to persuade us,  
that



that if these preachers are not enriched they cannot properly carry on their ministry from the want of a due weight with the people, which is to be obtained by that mean, is a mere mockery and priest-craft artfully introduced to acquire them wealth, or to support them in the possession ; and if the case were as they represent it, it would be as much as to say that Heaven on the one hand cannot propagate its gospel without having recourse to the trash of pelf and other worldly means for assistance, and on the other that the people were so ignorant that they would neither believe nor practise the doctrines of the gospel till they were informed of the wealth of the preacher. But fact proves the contrary of what these men assert, and that the minds of the multitude are not in this case influenced by the property of the preacher ; for when Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley entered upon the office of public preaching, they were persons of neither fortune nor property, yet were they attended by incredible multitudes whenever they preached ; it was their doctrine then (good or bad, for I pronounce nothing concerning it) and not their prosperous condition in life which influenced these multitudes and gained them such numbers of warmly devoted profelytes. These instances I give from know-

ledge of the facts, and many more might be adduced; so that I hope this jargon will be no more obtruded upon us to impose on the deluded understandings of mankind, it being evident that the preachers may promote, and effectually too the cause of religion however moderate their revenue, even as the Apostles did; and that it was never intended they should be made rich by the office, because no other provision is made for them by the gospel\* than a necessary maintenance on voluntary contribution, which is also confirmed and enforced again in the writings of Paul and Peter†. But they tell us, it is degrading to gentlemen of literature to be so supported. I know not where they imbibe this notion, but it seems it is not degrading to be supported by charity at the Universities, nor to receive fellowships which are but charities; and if it be degradation they may choose whether or not they will take upon them the office, no man can force it upon them, and if they enter upon it with such improper and high notions they appear to me disqualified

\* Matthew, ch. x. v. 10.—14. Mark, ch. vi. v. 7.—11. Luke, ch. ix. v. 2—6, and ch. x. v. 3—7; and in his Acts of the Apostles, ch. xx. v. 33.—34.

† 1 Tim. ch. iii. v. 3. 1 Tim. ch. vi. v. 8—12. Philip, ch. iv. v. 11—18. 1 Peter, ch. v. v. 2.—3.

disqualified for it; scripture which speaks plain and without ceremony alluding to them and their service expressly says “ the labourer is “ worthy of his hire.”\* But why more degrading to them than to other gentlemen of literature and of the same profession, though not provided for by a prodigal establishment, and who are perfectly satisfied with such a dispensation? or why more degrading than to others who are of the establishment, and yet accept of voluntary contribution for additional service, which if necessary, ought to be performed as included in the establishment? Or why is it more degrading to them than it was to the primitive pastors of the church who were all supported by voluntary oblations,† when religion was incorrupt and the purity and simplicity of their manners were a shining example of temperance in all things to the rest of mankind? Or lastly, why more degrading to them than it was to the Apostles who were contented to be supported,

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and

\* Luke, ch. x. v. 7. See also, 1 Tim. ch. v. v. 18.

† Dopo che Cristo N. Signore montò al Cielo li Santi Apostoli seguirono nella Chiesa di Gierusalemme l'istesso istituto d'haver il danaro Ecclesiastico per li due effetti sopra-detti, cioè per bisogno dell' Ministri dell' Evangelio e per elemosine de Poveri : e il fondo di quito danaro era similmente le oblationi dellè fedeli. Fra Paolo delle Matiere Beneficiare.

and whose life, manners and conversation one would imagine, if they do not mean to deal with duplicity by us, they would in all things endeavour to emulate. I suspect that under this allegation is concealed a fallacy ; or at least that one great objection to voluntary contributions is, that their duty must be attended to, but that under establishment—what is so notorious I need not express ! In the interim it may, or rather it may not be equivocal, whether if these gentlemen of literature who exclaim so loudly against voluntary contribution could be assured of raising by these means twice the sum they now receive under the establishment, all this nonsense of humiliation and degradation would not be instantly in the opinion of most of them removed, and generally acknowledged to be *vox pretereaque nihil*.

But to return to Mr. B. and his two bishops,  
 “ They can see,” says he, “ a bishop of Durham, or a bishop of Winchester, in possession  
 “ of ten thousand pounds a year ; and cannot  
 “ conceive why it is in worse hands than estates  
 “ to the like amount in the hands of this earl,  
 “ or that squire.\* If they cannot, I pity their  
 ignorance ;

\* P. 154.

ignorance; but I deny the assertion. Because it is impossible for them to conceive that their “learning, piety and virtue” can be intitled to such great rewards, or can bear *such fruit*, while hundreds of the same profession with at least an equal share of those accomplishments are almost starving on a comparison with their respective incomes.—If such immense estates are as well disposed of when in the hands of bishops, as in those of earls or squires, why would not all the estates of the kingdom be equally well disposed of if in the hands of the clergy as if in lay hands? This was once their beloved scheme, and judge Blackstone\* not only says that they would

\* “In deducing the history of which statutes” (of mortmain),  
 “it will be matter of curiosity to observe the great address  
 “and subtil contrivance of the ecclesiastics in eluding from  
 “time to time the laws in being, and the zeal with which  
 “successive parliaments have pursued them through all their  
 “finesses: how new remedies were still the parents of new  
 “evasions; till the legislature at last, though with difficulty,  
 “hath obtained a decisive victory.”

Blackstone’s Comm. b. ii. ch. 18. p. 168.

“Not content with the ample provision of tithes, which  
 “the law of the land had given to the parochial clergy, they  
 “endeavoured to grasp at the lands and inheritances of the  
 “kingdom, and (had not legislature withstood them) would  
 “by this time have probably been masters of every foot of  
 “ground in the kingdom.”

Id. b. iv. ch. 8. p. 107.

would in time have effected it, but so great were there manœuvres and consummate artifice that it called forth all the powers of government to defeat their project: an evident mark that the wisdom of that government did not conceive that those estates were as well disposed of in the hands of the church as they would be when in those of the laity.—No lands in a commercial country should be absorbed in mortmain; the hope of acquiring them is a spur to honest and active industry in contrast to drowsy sloth and idleness; estates when they come into the hands of the church are in irredeemable mortmain, but they pass from the hands of the earl and the squire into the hands of those who are more provident and industrious. The law has such aversion to mortmain that even it has limited entails which bears but a semblance of it to a very narrow compass.—The estates of the earl and the squire descend to them by inheritance, their ancestors acquired them by labour or industry of one kind or other, they furnished such a portion of these as was judged equivalent to so much estate or to so much specie as would purchase the estate, and the contract was carried on in an open market to which every man might have brought his industry and sold it for a valuable consideration,  
and

and afterwards leave it to his heir. But their lordships do not, I presume, consider themselves heirs to their fees, nor those fees to be inheritances, but rather that they are successors to them by the appointment of the civil power. What intrigues, cabals, and exertions of influence and interest are employed to obtain them, is best known to those who gain them by such means; and though it is possible that “learning, piety, and virtue” may be considered in the disposal of them, yet I apprehend they are not always the principal consideration.—How the church came into possession of these estates will hardly bear the inquiry;\* the means

\* The reader will be well informed of the manner by which the church gained its riches, its avarice, and abuse of them, by reading Father Paul on Benefices: this cannot be explained in a few quotations, the following may give him some intimation: *La gran divotione de' principi, e popoli si come fece crescere le ricchezze ecclesiastiche grandamente, così eccitò nelli ministri ecclesiastici gran sete al moltiplicarli, dal qual eccesso non furono manco li beni intentionati; imperocchè vedendo come la distributione de' beni ecclesiastici cadeva in gloria di Dio, e beneficio commune, concludevano, che quanto più vi fosse nella Chiesa da distribuire tanto meglio fosse: onde s'adoperavano con ogni via, e con ogni arte ad acquistarne, non avvertendo, se il modo che usavano, fosse legittimo, e conducente all' equità; ma purchè sortissero l'effetto, cioè, che la Chiesa acquistasse per qualunque via, le pareva traver fatto sacrificio a Dio — Così avvenne nelli primi tempi dopo che la Chiesa ottenne facoltà d'acquistare*



means being the same with those by which they would have possessed themselves of all the lands in the kingdom, had not the wisdom of legislature prevented them. I cannot therefore on the whole conceive but that these estates are in worse hands when in those of the bishops, than when in those of the earl or squire; and this, were it only the single plea in the concluding words of the quotation, because *lasciando la cura dell' insegnare la dottrina di Christo, tutti si occupavano nell' avaritia*, and if there is no employment for such persons, then no such persons are wanted; and if it be necessary to give such immense rewards for learning, let them be given, but why make religion the stalking-horse; religion, I say, which is a science in which least  
can

*d'acquifare beni stabili, era creduto da alcuni religiofi, che fuffe fervitio di Dio privare li proprii figliuoli, e parenti per donare alle Chiefe, perloche anco non tralasciavano arte alcuna per indur le Vedove, Donzelle, et altra perfonne facili, e privare le proprie cose per lasciare alla Chiesa: il disordine passò così presto li termini di esser superato, che fù necessitato il principe di provvederei.* Frà Paolo, delle Materie Benefic: p. 17—18. — With respect to the bishops he had before said: *Non si fermò però in questo stato il disordine, ma incominciarono li vescovi à mancare delle solite elemosine alli poveri, e ritener per se quello che dovea esser distribuito, e con li beni della Chiesa communi fatti ricchi, facendo anco delle usure per accrescerli, e lasciando la cura dell' insegnare la dottrina di Christo, tutti si occupavano nell' avaritia, le quali cose S. Cipriano piange.* Frà Paolo, ut suprà, p. 12.



can be known beyond what may be attained by a very moderate understanding on a diligent reading of the bible ; for what such cannot comprehend, the learned will only perplex with unfounded conjectures. So much of a law which is to be practised by all men, must necessarily be levelled to all men's capacities, and they are not to wait for the acquisition of learning, and lose that time which should have been more usefully employed in the performance of their duty.

But " it may be true, that so many dogs and " horses are not kept by the former\*." I know not what dogs or horses these bishops keep, but I take it for granted they keep as many as they like, and that they would not be restrained from keeping more, if they judged it convenient, on any qualms of religion. A person who has an estate for life only, if he has a family, cannot consistently with prudence squander away as much money as another who has a real estate of the same income, and which he can give to his heirs. And yet such bishops make no contemptible figure in horses, in equipages, in their parks, and their palaces, in their

I tables

\* P. 154.

tables and other luxuries, wherever the spirit of avarice is not predominant ; instead of dividing part of the spoil with their humble brothers, the curates, who do all the work while they sit idle, and for which they are religiously forgotten ; though their incessant labours, if praying and preaching to the people promote the cause of religion, render them more beneficial in one month, than the toils of many bishops in many years.

“ When once the commonwealth has established the estates of the church as property, it can, consistently, hear nothing of the more or the less\*.” I have already observed that the church establishment is a creature of the state, as much so as the army establishment ; the state judged such an establishment necessary, appropriated offices, and appointed officers, and whenever it shall judge them unnecessary in the whole or in part, it may in part or in the whole dissolve and disband them just as it may the army, and with equal consistency too, applying the expence to other purposes of the state. Who will have the presumption or bigotry to deny it ? I may be asked, is not then religion necessary

\* P. 154, 155.

fary in a state ? Unquestionably it is, and perhaps nothing is so necessary ; but it does not necessarily follow that to havè a religion you must have priests. We have a sect among ourselves whose devotion, piety, and purity of manners are at least equal to those of any other sect or people, yet there is not a priest among them : the Mahometan religion extends much farther, and embraces a greater number of devotees than the Christian religion, yet it is promulgated and supported without the aid of a single priest ; that religion knows nothing of them, and therefore there is no religious strife or animosity among them, they are unanimous because there are no allurements to diversity of opinion ; and the like unanimity would probably have attended the Christian religion, had succeeding preachers followed the example of the apostles, both in the reward they received and the doctrine they preached ; for they did not comment, as now, on texts of scripture, but only preached or published το εὐαγγέλιον, that is, “ the good message, news,” or, “ tiding.” which from a Saxon word we term “ the gospel,” and this “ good tiding,” was, that Christ was come into the world to save all who repented and believed on him : agreeably to this says Mark, ch. xiii. v. 10. “ The  
“ gospel must first be published among all na-

“ tions,” the terms employed *κρηχθῆναι το εὐαγγέλιον*, must have the construction above given, and cannot imply a comment on any part of the gospel, which was the practice of after times, and probably was the instrument which severed religion into so many divisions. But I may be thought to be wandering from my subject, which I will resume and close by observing, that wealth tends not to the benefit of religion, whether in the hands of bishops, or of the church in general, that if it is not pomp but humility which should be their boast, and that they have the least to do with human concerns of any set of men living; of this I will not bring evidence from the law of our religion, where it is constantly inculcated, lest I should be accused of fanaticism, but will cite the repeated testimony of a learned bishop, who, though deceived in some particulars, yet certainly had knowledge sufficient to inform him what was his duty and to recommend a like practice to others, which he has done in the persuasive words of eloquent Latin diction: *Illud non præteribo, quòd in secretario sedens, nunquam cathedra usus est. Nam in ecclesia nemo unquam illum sedere conspexit: sicut quendam nuper (testor dominum) non sine meo pudore vidi, sublimi solio, quasi regio tribunali, celsa fide respondentem.* Sulpicii Severi, dial. ii. p. 280. —

Again.

Again, the worthy bishop speaking from experience, knowledge, and the simplicity of an uncorrupt heart, says, what ought to be written in letters of gold. or rather deeply engraven on the mind of every man : *Ecclesiam auro non strui, sed potius destrui.* Sulpicii Severi, dial. ii. p. 246. *Araminium (episcopi) convenere: quibus omnibus annonas et cellaria dare imperator praeceperat. Sed id nostris. id est Aquitanis, Gallis, ac Britannis indecens visum: repudiatis fiscalibus, propriis sumptibus vivere maluerunt. Tres tantum ex Britannia, inopia proprii, publico usi sunt, cum oblatum à ceteris collationem respuissent: sanctius putantes fiscum gravare quam singulos. Hoc ego Gavidium episcopum nostrum, quasi obtrectantem referre solitum audiui. Sed longè alitur sencerim: laudique attribuo episcopis, tam pauperes fuisse, ut nihil proprium haberent.* Sulpicii Severi. Sacr. Hist. lib. ii. p. 162, 163. For the sake of brevity I will cite but one passage more : *Centum etiam argenti libras obtulit quas vir beatus nec respuit, nec recipit. Sed prius quam pondus illud monasterii limen attingeret, redimendis id captivis continuò deputavit. Et cum ei suggereretur à fratribus, ut aliquid ex eo in sumptum monasterii reservaret, omnibus enim angustum esse vitam, multis deesse vestitum. Nos, inquit, ecclesia et pascat et vestiat, dummodo nihil nostris usibus quaesisse videamur.* Sul. Sev. dial. iii. p. 325.

“ The people of England know how little in-  
 “ fluence the teachers of religion are likely to  
 “ have with the wealthy and powerful of long  
 “ standing, and how much less with the newly  
 “ fortunate, if they appear in a manner no way  
 “ afforded to those with whom they must asso-  
 “ ciate, and over whom they must even ex-  
 “ ercise, in some cases, something like an au-  
 “ thority.\*” I would fain understand what is  
 this, “ something like an authority,” this lisp-  
 ing, muttering expression, like that of a froward  
 child who dares not speak out lest it should be  
 understood and corrected. Mr. B. is here speak-  
 ing of these scientific “ teachers of religion,”  
 who associate with “ the wealthy and powerful,”  
 which is true enough, though it might be as well  
 if they associated more with persons of an in-  
 ferior degree; and over those wealthy and  
 powerful persons, “ they must even exercise, in  
 “ some cases, something like an authority:”  
 For what, and in what particulars? Is it really  
 an authority, or is it no authority, and where is  
 it to commence, and where is it to cease; all  
 these particulars should have been marked out  
 with the strictest line of precision; for it is dan-  
 gerous to establish an authority, which like re-  
 port,

\* P. 152, 153.

port, ever goes on encreasing, trampling down whatever it stands upon, and then imperiously buffetting with its head the clouds. If these wealthy and powerful persons can but read, they may soon know more of their religion than they will practise, by reading their testaments ; and this may be as eligible as learning it at secondhand from an interested teacher of religion ; his authority here then, I presume, is useless, for if they will not practise their duty which they collect from reading, why should they do so when they collect it from the teacher, unless Mr. B. thinks proper to arm him with coercion, and by a coup de legerdemain convert the teacher into a confessor. But “ the  
 “ people of England have discerning ears” and eyes too, and I trust will never be led back again to that old state ecclesiastical juggle.— From what we daily see some judgment may be formed of this association of the teachers of religion with the powerful and wealthy, and from what I have observed, it may by no means be generally considered as founded in religion, but in other views totally distant from it, and from which all authority is concluded, at least on the part of the teacher ; and as this association is fixed on the firm rock of mutual pleasure and convenience, nothing is likely to dissolve it, but  
 the

the teachers "presuming to " exercise; in some  
" cases, something like an authority."

But " what must they think," says our author, " of that body of teachers, if they see it in no  
" part above the establishment of their do-  
" mestic servants.\*" Does it follow, that be-  
cause no part of that establishment should be on  
a level with that of domestic servants, that there-  
fore there should be bishoprics to the enormous  
amount of ten thousand pounds or more an-  
nually? Is there no wholesome medium between  
an annual establishment of about forty or fifty  
pounds, and ten thousand! How much soever  
this gentleman may sooth the good people of  
England by flattering their discernment, I should  
apprehend that they had lost their senses if they  
did not in this instance make a proper discrimi-  
nation.—But I would ask in my turn, what opi-  
nion mankind must entertain of a great part of  
that body of teachers, whose claims amount to  
four millions of pounds sterling per annum, while  
the individuals are constantly exerting every  
nerve of interest to get as much of this sum as  
he possibly can by means of rich bishoprics,  
deaneries, and pluralities, leave by their rapa-  
ciousness



cioufness fuch of their brethren as have no interest, unfeelingly to partake without relief of an earned pittance for labour which is inferior to the establishment even of some of their own domestic servants? I may be told in the language of Mr. B. that we who complain are “cheats and deceivers,\*” for we act no better ourselves. Were the fact true, this would be only justifying one bad action by another, and this is not reasoning, but encouraging vice. However *we* may act, yet these teachers are confessedly a separate body of men set apart and paid for example. All men no doubt are commendable for setting good examples in all things; but it is particularly incumbent on these men to do so, by their office and function; they are raised as an object to the gazing multitude, and are distinguished from the rest by their habit, pay, and privileges; every bad precedent has more weight coming from them, than from others, and especially with the lower classes of the people who form the multitude. But I may be told, that these men are but human beings, subject to the like infirmities with ourselves. To which I answer, that he who cannot walk worthy of that vocation to which he has called

K himself,

himself, ought to decline it: his situation places him in a different light from other men; there are many things which in a layman would be indifferent, in him obnoxious; and if such a plea were admitted, vice might under it be almost softened down into the appearance of virtue, especially in the estimation of those who may imagine that "vice loses half its evil, by losing all its grossness,\*" according to the new doctrine of morality, and which it is to be hoped, our "teachers in religion" will not enforce by "the exercise of something like an authority," till they have re-considered their testaments, as I profess to see nothing there, nor even in ancient morality, which has the least tendency to support a position so favourable to the encouragement of every species of iniquity, by reducing it to half its enormity on the simple manœuvre of omitting grossness in the perpetration. Impressed with this notion we are no longer to be surprised, on observing its author directing his envenomed sarcasms against those who would reform flagrant abuses, telling mankind that, "These men speak broad. Their tongue betrays them. Their language is in the *patois* of fraud; in the cant and gibberish  
" of

“ of hypocrisy. The people of England must  
 “ think so, when these praters affect to carry  
 “ back the clergy to that primitive evangelic  
 “ poverty which, in spirit ought always to exist  
 “ in them.”\* Yet if those words “ poverty in  
 “ spirit” mean any thing, notwithstanding the  
 commendation, it is that very disposition which  
 we are here condemning. It is this “ poverty  
 “ in spirit,” for no poverty in spirit can be  
 evangelical, the term is nonsense so applied,  
 that excites in them that censurable avarice and  
 rapacity to seize on the large revenues of the  
 church and not divide them with their poor  
 brethren; to grasp a number of lucrative plu-  
 ralities, as many as he can obtain, and appro-  
 priate them to himself alone, which were in-  
 tended, as in justice they ought to be severally  
 disposed of among as many individuals †, and

K 2

this

\* P. 155.

† Formerly no ecclesiastic entertained so much as an idea  
 of having more than one benefice, it was a personal service and  
 on that account did not admit of it, and was thought to be at  
 least equal to any man’s abilities: so far from holding many,  
 it was not permitted them to exchange one benefice for ano-  
 ther more lucrative. *Nelli tempi primi della Chiesa, era un santo*  
*e lodevol uso, che chi era ordinata ad’una Chiesa, mai in sua vita*  
*lasciava il carico, per haver Beneficio di maggiore rendita, ò di*  
*maggiore honore; pareva a ciascun’ assai face l’ufficio suo al*  
*meglio.* Frà Paolo, delle Matiere Benefic. p. 176.

this is in contempt of their brethren in distress, of reason, and of justice. From the same "poverty in spirit" proceeds non-residence, so generally complained of; for our clergy throughout the country are become so learned and persons of such exquisite taste and feelings, that their parishioners whom they were appointed principally to benefit, and from whom they receive their pay, are now thought too contemptible to be associated with; they therefore leave them to their fate and retire to large towns or cities, where they find a variety of more rational amusement amidst more polished company. But if we complain of these and many other abuses, from which I apprehend the nation in general is a great sufferer, we are termed illiberal, and treated with contemptuous illiberal abuse. Yet I think nothing can be more illiberal than the practices I have described, and perhaps nothing throughout the kingdom calls louder for a reform, even though the consequence should be of calling them back to that primitive evangelic purity and simplicity of life and manners, which I conceive should be inseparable from their order, in all times and in all places, whatever changes and revolutions the state of sublunary things may undergo. But I would not wish them to be contaminated either "with poverty in spirit" or to be "poor in spirit," since these

these are expressions which in our language are synonymous to " meanness of spirit ;" and although the former may be supposed to be justified by a passage which may be thought analogous in Matthew, ch. v. v. 3. " Blessed are " the poor in spirit," yet whoever will consider the original will see, *οι πτωχοι τῷ πνεύματι*, does not mean to be " poor in spirit," but to be in spirit as the poor are generally represented, that is " humble and meek." And this meekness of spirit though it may be derided by the frivolous, and the possessor injured by the violent and oppressor, yet is it revered by all good men, and crowned with a blessing from the author of our religion—But to return, I may be told in alleviation of the abuses, for justification there can be none, that in most professions there are gradations, as in the army and navy, where from humble and unprofitable beginnings men rise to honourable and profitable posts. I answer that the church makes a mockery of all this ; that if a man has interest he may be a layman to day of any profession, and to-morrow become clerical and enter immediately on benefices to the value of two hundred or two thousand pounds a year or more ; and all this attended with as little trouble as the putting off one coat to put on another, even to the holding

holding of pluralities\*, though a personal office, as though a man could divide himself, and officiate in two places at the same time. The duty of a pastor was formerly considered as laborious, and conscience was thought to be concerned in entering upon and performing that office; but these qualms being dissipated by abuses which are become in a manner general, nothing more is looked to than the income, and this is considered merely as a life estate; and therefore especially of late years it has been a common practice to relinquish professions which are laborious or hazardous, and seek an asylum in the church where there is more convenience, ease, and better pay. But I conceive it is rather hard upon the laity, that because these men have thought proper for their own conveniency and emolument to change their coats from blue, or red, or any other colour, to black, that therefore they should immediately assume the power of “exercising something like an authority” over us poor laity, and none over that order into which they were recently admitted; as though the changing

\* In the army I believe we never hear of a captain commanding two distinct companies; nor in the navy of a captain being captain of two men of war at the same time; why? because it is a personal service, and therefore hideously inconsistent.

ing a coat or wig conveyed knowledge or power, and that these men were much wiser now, than when they pursued their former profession. Undoubtably they are as the children of this world, and the rest of their order opprobriously stile them wolves leaping over the fold to run off with what they term *their* property; but this also convinces me that these too have set their hearts full as much upon the profits which are derived from the trafic in religion, as upon religion itself; for certainly they would not wound them with terms of reproach, if they interfered not with their emoluments and preached for nothing.

Mr. B. observes, " And after all, with this  
 " gothic and monkish education (for such it is  
 " in the ground-work) we may put in our  
 " claim to as ample and as early a share in all  
 " the improvements in science, in arts, and in  
 " literature, which have illuminated and adorn-  
 " ed the modern world, as any other nation in  
 " Europe."\* Be it so, but who is *we*? For  
 the passage is so managed that unless Mr. B.'s  
 friend reads cautiously he may imagine he  
 means, we of this kingdom or of these king-  
 doms; but it is no such matter, for *we* means,  
 we



we of the church establishment, who as he expresses himself at a little distance before\*, “ we of the old ecclesiastical modes and fashions of institutions,” and, “ we found these old institutions, on the whole, favourable to morality and discipline, &c.”†: so that in fact he confines all this merit to those of the church establishment. Does not this resemble the honest trick of robbing other men’s houses of their furniture to adorn our own? At this rate, Scotland is but a boast, and all of this kingdom who are not of the church establishment must be considered as dolls and idiots, for not having contributed so much as their mites to this mighty mass of art and science. Does this proceed from vanity, folly, or what? I will mention no names, it is invidious; but I will intreat the reader to turn his eyes towards Scotland if he can without blushing; and on the various bodies of dissenters of this kingdom if he can without indignation, at this exclusive and silent contempt of their abilities. But this is not the only instance by many in which this writer *Conatus est clarissimis rebus tenebras obducere*‡: but the reader must be illiterate indeed whose discernment cannot penetrate this mist of sophistry.

Mr.

\* P. 148. † P. 149. ‡ Cic. Lucull. cap. iii. p. 7.



Mr. B. may flatter himself that he has said something extremely fascinating and pleasing to the ears of the people of this kingdom in his account of liberty\*, and their title to it as an inheritance†, together with its “bearing and “ensigns armorial” with its “gallery of portraits, its monumental inscriptions, &c. &c.”

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\* P. 149.

† I cannot by any means be prevailed on, by any thing advanced by Mr. B. to consider my liberty in the light of an inheritance from my forefathers. For it may be said to me, you claim your liberty as an inheritance from your ancestors, but where is *their* title to it, and how came they by it? You plead indeed your Bill of Rights and Magna Charta; but these are not title deeds; they are no more than *recognitions* of rights obtained by your ancestors on a supposed prior good title; that title I question; and until you have established it, these recognitions will not take effect. So that for want of the original which is called for, and which cannot be made out, on Mr. B.'s plan, we may at last be ousted of our liberties. But if I claim my liberty on a grant from Heaven, the title is indisputable, for the appeal is to every man's reason; every ingenuous mind will acknowledge the consciousness of it, and mankind be unanimous in the decision. To claim too under this title is certainly more honourable, than under parchment Bill of Rights and Magna Charta, which grant it as an indulgent concession, or as an act derived from present necessity and which may be contended to have been wrenched from the hands of power by the untowardness of the times. And if I mistake not a similar plea has been agitated.

One would conclude he was describing the folly of that weakness stuck up in some churches over the vaults of the proud ennobled dead, by the vanity of their mean heirs or successors. It rather represents the accomplishments of departed liberty, than of liberty in full health and vigor.—I enter not upon liberty by the flimsy title of inheritance; I found my right on a superior claim. It is the gift of Heaven to all mankind; he has the same title to it that he has to life; it is a grant from the same bounteous donor; born of slaves or free-men he brings it with him, when he comes into the world; and he cannot with justice be deprived of it but by an act of his own. Fraud or violence may wrench it from him as it may every thing else; but it is still fraud or violence, though it be the act of a prince, and as much so as if it were the act of a private individual; the means too which have ousted him of it, will teach him, and justifiably too, the means of recovering it. I will not then stand indebted to man, and his feeble and frequently wicked counsel, for my liberty; I claim it as the gracious gift of Heaven, the sole author of the boon.—This is natural liberty, and this he may restrain and confine within narrower limits, as when man enters into a state of society he then relinquishes

relinquishes a part of this natural liberty for the general good of the whole society : but neither this civil liberty, nor natural liberty, nor any other liberty that I know of accords with Mr. B.'s account of it when he says " the effect of " liberty to individuals is, that they may do " what they please," because reason, conscience and the laws of God, each of them and all of them, whether in or out of society evidently suggest to each individual that he is not to murder ; but civil liberty, which is the liberty I am now speaking to consists in the power which every person has of doing what he pleases provided it be not repugnant to the laws of God, nor to laws in the enacting of which he has duly participated. If he has had no share in making those laws, I do not see how those laws concern him ; he lives it is true among others under laws which restrain natural liberty, but what is that law to him who has had no share in the making it, and is therefore not bound to obey it : for every man before he entered into society had an equal share of liberty, on entering into society he ought therefore to have an equal share in forming those laws by which his liberty is to be abridged. I have advanced thus much because Mr. B. observes \*

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only

“ only say here, in justice to that old fashioned  
 “ constitution, under which we have long prof-  
 “ pered, that our representation has been  
 “ found perfectly adequate to all the purposes  
 “ for which a representation can be desired or  
 “ devised ;” and probably he might have alleged  
 the same, and with equal truth, if the electors  
 were only one tenth of their present number.  
 But if those who are deprived of a voice in  
 enacting laws should think otherwise, and they  
 have as good a right to think for themselves  
 as Mr. B. has to think for them, and should  
 they take the matter up on the footing of in-  
 justice as they may well do, what then will his  
 unfounded assertion avail ? can he imagine his  
 ipse dixit will have more consequential weight  
 than a fly on a broad-wheel waggon. I am well  
 persuaded the American war, which I think  
 Mr. B. condemned as well as myself, with all  
 its ruinous and fatal consequences to this nation,  
 and from which it will not, if ever, recover in  
 a century, was principally to be imputed to this  
 inadequate representation ; that war had never  
 been entered upon had there been a just and  
 equal representation, for the majority of the  
 people opposed it, which was the cause of its  
 terminating so injuriously to us. I must there-  
 fore deny “ that our representation has been  
 “ found

“ found perfectly adequate to all the purposes  
 “ for which a representation of the people can  
 “ be desired or devised ;” on the contrary it  
 appears to me to be far better calculated, together with its long parliaments, to serve the purposes and schemes of a despotic ministry, than to promote the cause and benefit of the people. How long it may be submitted to I know not ; an attempt towards a melioration has been begun, and for the present seems to be relinquished, but this is no reason why it may not be again resumed, and insisted on, when the first favourable opportunity shall offer.

The present unequal representation certainly does *not* answer the purposes of the people ; and may be productive of much future evil which ought to be prevented by an adequate representation. Suppose eighty persons in every hundred throughout the kingdom are not represented ; and that they should say, You gentlemen are represented and have a share in legislation, therefore you must approve, and pay, these taxes ; but we have no share in legislation, we neither elect nor are represented, neither do we approve of this multitude of taxes, and therefore we will not pay them. Was not a case exactly similar the cause of the American war ; the  
 Americans

Americans would not be taxed because not represented; and this doctrine is perfectly consonant to the constitution of England. I ask, if these men should argue thus, would they not have reason and justice on their side? and how would you in conscience oblige them to the payment? The project against America Mr. B. reprobated, how can he support the like here; the doctrine of taxation without representation was productive of infinite mischief; is it then to be adhered to and perpetuated here; reason and equity are against it, and what is more, numbers. Numbers, he may say, as he somewhere does, "is the law of force;" I answer, not necessarily so, it may as often be the law of right. Numbers certainly imply force, yet not merely force, but also reason and right. Take promiscuously five hundred persons on one hand, and fifty on the other, and it is most probable there will be more force in the former than in the latter, it is also highly probable that there will be more reason also: no good cause can be assigned why the probability is not in favour of there being more wisdom among the five hundred persons than among the fifty. Upon the whole therefore, there seems to be a necessity for an adequate representation were it only to prevent the evil we have been treating of; and this

this not only possible but probable evil demonstrates that the present representation does not answer, as says Mr. B. every purpose of an adequate representation. Is it then prudent to sit quietly down satisfied with Mr. B.'s bare assertion, and wait the event ?

I shall now treat of the crown of these kingdoms, and examine whether it be hereditary or not : but I must first premise that under the present parliamentary representation, unequal, inadequate, and unjust as it appears to me, yet we must suppose it to be a true representation of all the commons of these kingdoms, as it is considered as such in the eye of the law and fiction, whatever it may be in reality in the scales of justice and reason.—When a crown is said to be hereditary, it must at least be attended with the sanction of uniformity in descent. If there be but one precedent in the succession to the contrary, however minute the deviation, the uniformity of this chain of hereditary succession is as effectually destroyed by this one link being broken as if these durations were many and various. And Mr. B. appears to me to be totally mistaken when he endeavours to justify his opinion by saying “ *Privilegium non transit in exemplum ;*”

“ *emplum* ;” \* for he is not there treating of privileges, but the law of inheritance, and to which that does not apply. The like happens in modules and whatever depends on custom ; the custom being broken, the law which was founded upon it is wholly destroyed and done away. The uniformity of hereditary succession is destroyed by setting aside the next in blood, in the male line where there is one. Of this there are several instances in the descent of the crown of England. Whenever this happened it was always effected by the voice, election, and choice of the people. Mr. B.’s own words convince this when he says, “ there is no person “ so completely ignorant of our history, as not “ to know, that the majority in parliament of “ both parties were so little disposed to any “ thing resembling that principle, that at first “ they were determined to place the vacant “ crown, not on the head of the Prince of “ Orange, but on that of his wife Mary.†” That *they* first concluded on one thing and then determined upon another, evinces that they judged they had a right to do either, and that the crown was at their disposal ; this also appears from the fact in their crowning of the Prince

\* P. 22.      † P. 73.



Prince of Orange who was *not* the heir. In crowning the Prince of Orange they to all intents and purposes *elected* him to the crown; and who are *they* who elected him, but the two houses, who, as above explained, do fully imply all the people and every individual in these kingdoms. And if this be not an election of the people, I profess not to understand what is so.—So much for the crown being elective; but they have a further right, for the people may oust the possessor by whatever right he may have obtained the possession; the precedent in James II. to go no further, establishes this right, and if there be not an absolute indefeasible right vested in the people to oust and to elect, then I protest I cannot discover how all those who have succeeded James II. down to the present time are not usurpers: for if they do not found their right in the right of the people to oust and to elect, they do not appear to me to have any right. The act of James is called an abdication, as though it were a voluntary act; it was a voluntary act of the like nature with that of a prisoner who voluntarily follows from necessity; and the fact is, that James could hold the throne no longer against the opposition of the people, he therefore voluntarily fled by constraint. The true construction of which is, that he was absolutely

and to all intents and purposes ousted by the people. And if the people had not a right to oust, they could have no right to elect his successor, as in such case there was no vacancy, for though he abdicated, yet might he again return and take possession ; but that which prevented this was the exerted right of the people which ousted and excluded him and heirs for ever, by their *election* of the Prince of Orange. That by which this was effected was truly an election or choice, and not an act of parliament, for the two estates without the third cannot make an act of parliament, and nothing is binding on the people but an act of parliament ; it was therefore as I said, a choice or election made by both houses in behalf of all the people of these kingdoms who were present, either in their own persons, or virtually by their representatives. On the whole then I conclude from precedent, that the crown of these kingdoms is elective, and not hereditary ; and that the people on good and substantial reasons may oust or eject the possessor : to which last assertion Mr. B. appears to me to assent, when with strict propriety he declares that “ the punishment of real tyrants is  
 “ a noble and awful act of justice ;” \* for I know  
 but

\* P. 123.

but of two ways by which such crimes can be properly and with any degree of security punished, and the mildest by far of the two, and for which reason I should certainly adopt it, is by ejection. But though the crown be elective, and the right of election resides in the people, yet it is not necessary that such right should on all occasions be exercised; nothing is easier to be conceived than that a person may possess the most full and ample right, and yet it may be imprudent to exert it, and prudent to let it lie dormant. On this principle I imagine the wisdom of the nation has tacitly acquiesced in permitting the crown to devolve by descent where no important objection appeared, thereby avoiding the excesses which might probably be attendant on such an election. And I presume the same wisdom will, should it ever become necessary, which heaven forbid, determine them not only to exert this their right of election, but also that of ejection. I am, however, very far from thinking this a trifling concern either on the part of the prince or people, yet causes may in future arise to render such measures necessary; what may be generating in the womb of time no human wisdom can explore, and therefore these rights are not to be surrendered or buried in oblivion, though lulled to rest while all is peace-

ful, harmonious, and beneficent ; or even were that harmony in some considerable degree interrupted it might not be altogether prudent to rouse these rights from their beds of peace ; there should be some violent cause to call forth such powerful effects ; the symptoms of the disease should be deadly when desperation introduces these drastic applications which are to succede the use of more lenient medicines and methods which after repeated trial have been found to fail.

I have been the rather induced freely to declare my sentiments on this subject, because some timid or designing minds have considered it as a matter which should never be agitated ; my opinion is different from theirs for the sake both of the prince and the people. Where rights are not known and defined, there can be no certain or settled rule of action ; we are wandering by the uncertain flitting gleam of a meteor instead of clear day-light. No man not verging to bankruptcy dislikes looking into his accounts, the more flourishing his condition the more cheerfully he examines them ; similar to this is the case of the people of these kingdoms ; and as what we have been discoursing upon, forms one of their most important accounts, the state  
of

of it should be scrupulously examined, fairly drawn out, and held up to public view and inspection ; when thus exposed, neither party can err through ignorance, whatever he may do through intentional perverseness ; and the conclusion is, that many errors will thus be avoided which from mistaken principles might tend to embarrass each. If I have a right but know not what it is, nor how far it extends, nor when it is proper to use it, or suffer it to be dormant, I might as well, or perhaps better be without it ; for an improper use of it in any way might bring distress on myself or others ; but when myself and all who are interested are acquainted with this right and its contingencies, nothing but an unaccountable and wilful perversion, not error or mistake, can make it the cause of injurious contention. To bring it forth therefore, to assert, explain and define it, to hint at those seasons when it may and when it should not be excited, appears to me beneficial to both parties as the surest mode of producing tranquility, peace, and harmony, by keeping each within its proper line of conduct ; which, on the one side or on the other, might be erroneously transgressed or craftily eluded, while this right lay concealed in obscurity and ignorance as something too dangerous to be brought forth and handled.

But

But I repeat it, that these rights though unquestionable, should never be exercised but in the last stages of the state disease when all other remedies have been tried and found ineffectual; then only are they to be exerted, then only is the measure wise, and then this wisdom will be justified of her children. But unless these rights are vested in the people their condition must be truly pitiable; they can be no better than hewers of wood and drawers of water; the makers of brick without straw for their taskmasters; beasts of burthen, and beasts of reproach, without the hope of meliorating their condition; Egyptian bondage ceased, but here is a slavery without end.

Before I quit this article of the succession I must take notice of a passage in Mr. B.'s letter where he says, "The terms of this act bind us, "our heirs, and our posterity, to them, their "heirs, and their posterity;"\* to which he adds, "being protestants, to the end of time." I can but smile to see it enforced by the words "to the end of time," as though every act of parliament which did not express the contrary, was not considered as perpetual at the time it

was

\* P. 33.

was enacted, how soon soever afterwards it might be repealed; and as though an act of parliament which declares itself to be perpetual could not be repealed by any succeeding parliament; for if one parliament has the power to enact, a succeeding parliament has an equal power, and surely may repeal. Mr. B. seems to me to confound two things in themselves perfectly distinct, an act of parliament, and a contract; now this was an act of parliament, and not a contract as that was at the union, and which cannot be avoided but by consent of the parties; whereas this being an act of parliament it may be repealed by any succeeding parliament, and therefore may not be binding as he expresses it “to the end of time.”—The only provision is, they “being protestants;” as though it were impossible that a people could be made wretched under a protestant prince; and by securing *that* obtained every thing. At this rate our lives, liberty and property are all sacrificed to a name; and if the people so understand it with Mr. B. I cannot see they can have reason to complain be the event what it may. But the doubt is, whether they will be prevailed on to embrace this heretical doctrine.

From



From visions of politics let us for a moment pass with Mr. B. to visions of love, beauty, and enthusiastic admiration, wrapped up in the giddy rant of rhapsody. The fire of the boy in his teens seems re-kindled in the icy veins of this old gentleman; the recollection of the rays of beauty seems at this distance of time to impart a glow even in the winter of age, and to revive the extinguished flames of youth and love. But he must be heard; and observe with what solemnity and diffidence this important business is opened,\* while all the attentive world stands mute to hear. “ It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision.”\* Reader, didst thou or did any man ever see “ a vision” with or without wings “ light on this orb ?” No. Then “ surely never lighted on this orb a more delightful vision” if none ever lighted on it before. This is adhering to truth and propriety. I would have given something for a peep at this paragon who after she lighted stood firm on this orb “ which she hardly seemed to touch ;” who bore

\* P. 112.



bore the semblance of bone and flesh which were but visionary. Virgil's Camilla was but a lumpish she afs to her, as her lightness was the mere effect of the swiftness of her motion,

— *cursumque pedum praevertere ventus.*

And after all she only

*Intactas segetis per summa volaret  
Gramina ; nec teneras cursu laesisset aristas  
Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumentis  
Ferret iter ; celeres nec tingeret aquora plantas.*

But Mr. B. does not proceed to inform us of his queen

*Illam omnis telluris agrisque effusa juventus  
Turbaque miratur matrem, et prospectat euntem ;  
Attonitis inhians animis—*

Vir. Æn. vii. v. 807—811.

No ; that he saw her, loved, and admired, is sufficient ; what the rest of the world thought does not merit consideration.—He goes on, “ I saw her just above the horizon.” Where could this be ; the horizon at Versailles !—— “ Decorating and cheering the elevated sphere “ she just began to move in.” The words “ to “ move in,” form an elegant and harmonious close to this sentence ; the writer seems to have run himself out of breath, though the panegy-

ric is but just begun. Thus we go on from the turgid to the languid, following the course of nature, after a storm succeeds a calm.—“ Glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and “ splendor, and joy.” No doubt joyous enough at being released from confinement to display herself and be admired; in this there is nothing visionary. “ Oh! what a <sup>^</sup>revolution!” Ay, a revolution indeed, and they have to thank Heaven for it. But is Mr. B. the man of experience,\* observation, and all that, to be surprised at such a revolution, as though nothing similar had ever happened before, while histories teem with such, and greater, revolutions; and every kingdom in its turn will furnish the like wherever the rights of mankind are violated and contemned. Had I a voice that could be heard amidst the pomp of pride, the ardor of ambition, and the tumult of passions, I would exclaim as a friendly monitor, princes! to reign securely, ye must reign in the hearts of your subjects.—“ Little did I dream,” and again says he, “ little did I dream;” though it should seem he is dreaming throughout the whole of this “ vision;” till starting from this dream, breaks forth into, “ I thought ~~ten~~ thou-  
“ fand

\* P. 126. et alibi.

“ sand swords must have leaped from their  
 “ scabbards to avenge even a look that threat-  
 “ ened her with insult.” We have read of the  
 automaton tripods of Homer,\* the self-opening  
 gate of Milton,† and to vie with these we have  
 now the self-leaping swords of Mr. B. from  
 their scabbards: wonderfully sublime truly;  
 may we call this poetry or prose run mad.  
 This new invented machinery will I suppose  
 be adopted by the military; but I must confess  
 myself so firm a friend to peace, that I should  
 sooner think of rivetting them there, were it  
 only to prevent frantic frolics similar to that  
 adverted to by Mr. B.—“ But the age of  
 “ chivalry is gone.”‡—Ay, thank Heaven and  
 Cervantes! and it were better that all its abet-

N 2

tors

\* ——— Τριποδας γὰρ εἰκοσι παντας εἵενχεν,  
 ἑσταμεναι περὶ τοίχων εὐσταθὲος μεγαροιοῦ.  
 Χρυσέα δὲ σφ’ ὑπο κυκλά ἐκαστῶ πυθμην θῆκεν,  
 ὅφρα οἱ αὐτοματὶ θεῶν δισσαιοτ’ ἀγῶνα,  
 ἥδ’ αὐτὶς πρὸς δαμα νοηατο, δαμα ἰδεσθαι.

Hom. Iliad, (Σ) xviii. v. 373—377.

† ————till at the gate  
 Of Heav’n arriv’d, the gate self open’d wide  
 On golden hinges turning, as by work  
 Divine the sov’ran architect had fram’d.

Milton, P. L. b. v. v. 255—256.

‡ P. 113.

tors were gone with it, than to have it revived : there are but too many madmen already in the world without seeking for an addition in knight-errantry, when we should be under the necessity of covering the area in Moorfields as a repository for their distempered brains—And here we give the finishing stroke to this tinsel description of her majesty, which in my opinion is so far from an encomium that it neither enhances her virtues, nor does the least credit to its author. And the reader, who perceives the qualms of sickness or langour assailing him, may perhaps find a reviving cordial in what is said on a subject somewhat analogous by the pen of Milton, which thus delineates the queen of the universe :

---

On she came,  
 Led by her heav'nly Maker, though unseen,  
 And guided by his voice, nor uninformed  
 Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites :  
 Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,  
 In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.

Parad. Lost, b. viii. v. 484—489.

Milton's judgment was too refined and accurate to bring her down, heaven knows whence, alighting as it were a sparrow upon a dunghill, there to glitter like a potsherd. No, led by the heaven of her mind, her innate conscious virtue,

virtue, and in the modest confidence of the purity of her undissembled affection, she goes forth to meet the partner of all that Heaven could give in a human form ; and as she moved towards him,

Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her eye,  
In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.

Thus a transcendent genius by a few strokes gives grandeur and dignity to his subject ; while minor geniuses, with all their elaborate pains, mark it with a *politesse*, which renders it mean, and sometimes contemptible.

I have in my time frequently heard, and do still hear\* the parade of much metaphysical jargon touching governments ; and when writers have bewildered themselves in the intricate and endless labyrinths of unfounded metaphysics if they can find readers weak enough to follow them, they must be bewildered likewise. This may answer latent purposes, for it renders government an occult science, and then tends to exclude all the non-initiated with them in their mysteries from entertaining any just idea of government as incompatible with their abilities

\* P. 143—145. et alibi.

ties and situation ; and this ultimately closes in passive obedience and non-resistance. The divine right of kings, which implies despotism, was formerly so much agitated that the divine rights of men, which must have had prior existence and were infinitely better founded, were almost forgotten : the combination was that the priest should support this same divine right, and in return the divine right should support the priest. But the people would be duped by neither ; and this despotism, otherwise called divine right, at one time so firmly maintained, becoming contemptible, was so relaxed as to be unserviceable : hereupon politicians racked their brains to produce a similar effect from a different cause. To this end they endeavour to persuade mankind that government is a metaphysical science, of course all men are debarred meddling with it but the adepts ; as these are few in number, so all but a few are excluded reasoning upon it,\* and as the governing power can always command a few, their doctrine will ever be that which is pleasing to that power, and the pleasing doctrine to most of them is absolute power and passive obedience. Another mode was also adopted, and that generally

\* P. 143.

nerally throughout Europe, which was, that as the preachments of the priests could not prevail, a numerous military force should be established to threaten and over awe the people. This was precisely the case in France, and, though unintentionally, confessed to be so by Mr. B. for he says, speaking of this army which with a sneer he terms “ Janissaries” \* which I understand to be a term of contempt, “ If they are not cut off by a rebellion of their  
 “ people, they may be strangled by the very  
 “ janissaries kept for their security against all  
 “ other rebellion.” We see then plainly the purpose for which such armies at so vast an expence are maintained; such is the principal view in their establishment; but a fatal consequence attends it; for as such numbers with arms in their hands become dangerous if kept in idleness, so if there is no employment for them at home they must be used abroad, and hence arise those frequent wars, or massacres among the nations of Europe. These armies thus commanding implicit obedience in their respective countries, the people so awed must be wretched; where men may not speak of government and its proceedings, ap-  
 prove

\* P. 138.

prove or condemn, remonstrate and reform; as their prudence regulated by occurring events and circumstances shall direct, such subjects, I say, are no better than slaves or mere machines, stand on the same level with their cattle, and are confounded by government in one general mass. Let interested or impassioned persons reason ever so long, with all their fucated arguments, crafty sophistry, and the artifice of throwing plainness into perplexity, yet they will never be able to persuade one rational man, that this was not the precise state of the French nation previous to the revolution. Every intelligent and candid person in that kingdom knew it, and sighed for redress; but they dreaded the army which had been the dire instrument of despotism and distress. That army, as by inspiration, became at once enlightened and generous, resented the baseness of that business in which it had been employed, and with a spirit which will ever immortalize it, gave its suffrage and support to the cause of liberty. The individuals understood, that before they became soldiers they were citizens; that the duty of a citizen is paramount to all duties next to that due to Heaven; that the first duty of a good citizen is to rescue his fellow citizens from the chains of bondage, and  
place



place them in the situation of men. In this, that army co-operated, and it reflects higher honour and brighter lustre on their character, than if they had gained a compleat victory over ten times their own number in battle.

But this it seems in the estimation of Mr. B: the quondam patriot, is deserving of reprehension, who informs us in his usual stile of misrepresentation, " Thus we have seen the King of France sold by his soldiers for an increase of pay."\* But if an increase of pay had effected this, a super added additional pay would have brought them back again; for men who act only for pay and have no principle, are always to be biassed by a superior influence of profit. Hence it appears to me, that if they received additional pay, yet the motive on which they acted was principle. When mankind act purely for profit they relinquish principle, but when they act on principle they are not to be warped by profit. I know not experimentally the influence of pay; but those who do, are apt to impute more to it than those who are unpractised will readily admit, judging perhaps from their own feelings and actions, which however

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\* P. 133.

are not applicable to all cases and circumstances. I would not be understood in this to say that Mr. B. judges from his own experience ; for I will not give credit till better informed, and hardly then, of an insinuation which has been thrown out,\* that he receives a pension of one thousand five hundred pounds a year on the Irish establishment ; I have several insurmountable reasons to fix me in a contrary opinion.— In the first place Mr. B. was a patriot, and patriots plead not for pay in the cause of the people ; pay and patriotism are inconsistent, heterogeneous ; when the motive is pay all patriotism vanishes, we cannot serve two masters. Next, men of honour claim no more than their due ; and I persuade myself that though Mr. B. thinks that ten thousand pounds sterling a year is not too much to pay for the piety and virtue of a bishop, yet he conceives his own merit in any thing and in all things in which he has served his country cannot be estimated at so high a rate as one thousand five hundred pounds a year ; and that it would shock his feelings and his modesty not only to accept it, but to have the tender of it made to him. And lastly, the insinuation comes to us in the most questionable shape,

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\* See, “ The Rights of Men.”

it being alledged that he receives the pension “ in a fictitious name ;” this, would cast a shade of darkness on the deed, and “ men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” I make no scruple therefore to assert that for my own part, I consider this insinuation as uncandid and malevolent, the effect of envy sporting its detractions against that which it has not the virtue to emulate. But at the same time that I cannot believe imaginary assertions and baseless visions, yet can I give full credit to what Mr. B. himself has advanced analogous to this subject ; and he tells us, speaking of the preceding sentiments in his letter, that “ they come from one who derives honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little.”\* He then certainly desires them ; and the terms “ but little,” are so vague and indefinite that no one can truly measure them but the mind of the writer. What excellent skill some men possess of expressing their earnest wishes so as to be thought, and not to be thought at the same instant, to entertain any such desire ! Too sturdy directly to ask, but not so magnanimous as to refuse ; if you will offer, we are ready to accept, whether they be honours, distinctions, emolu-

O 2 ments,

\* P. 354.

ments, or any thing else ; and though we desire them but little, yet we are ready to accept a great deal, and that cheerfully and thankfully. If this be a just construction of that passage, as I trust every one will conclude it to be, we have here then a clue that will guide us through all the labyrinths of recoiling doctrines so repeatedly and falsely given under the signature of *We* : whilst *we* absolutely disclaim, by far the greater part of them, and pronounce them no better than forgeries, as *we* were never consulted either in the signing or in the giving so much as our assent to them ; but on the contrary, reprobate them with detestation, as false, injudicious, erroneous, as fraught with mischief to the cause of religion, of civil polity, and of the public weal. Hence too it may be accounted for why he sacrifices his farrago of incense on the altars of flattery to the king and queen of France ; and why, on the other hand, he calls forth from their gloomy haunts the infernal spirits of invective, abuse, and detraction, and lets them loose on the heads of the principal revolutionists, the National Assembly, the army, and in short the whole commonalty of the injured people of France. But I may be asked, how can he “ who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little,” expect that desire can be gratified

gratified by such a procedure? It has been the repeated practice of most courts of Europe, that when a foreign prince conceives himself to have been benefited by the subject of another prince, to recommend him to his own prince as an object of favour and distinction; the *politesse* of courts rarely, if ever, passes over such recommendation with indifference: and men who desire these distinctions though but little, will employ every lure to catch them. It should seem then that so far from Mr. B. receiving a pension of one thousand five hundred pounds a year on the Irish establishment under a fictitious name, that from his own words he has not as yet been gratified in his desires, nor does he desist from the pursuit though hitherto he has been disregarded, and treated with neglect:

In sober old England, once wise, as says Fame,  
If men could not succeed, they relinquish'd the game:  
But now we're grown wiser as some wizards think,  
And the case is revers'd—in distinctions and chink.

I have hinted above that Mr. B. is guilty of misinterpretation, or misrepresentation. I will select, from among many, a few instances. But as I shall make use of Dr. Price's name, I judge it necessary to premise, that I am not a dissenter, and that I never frequented any public place of  
worship

worship but the church of England, though in some parts of its service to which I have insurmountable objections I do not join : that as to Dr. Price, I never saw him in my life to know him, nor had I ever any communications with him. On seeing this person so petulantly treated, or as I should conceive grossly insulted, repeatedly, and with a profusion of bitterness and ill-will in Mr. B.'s letter, I have endeavoured to obtain a just account of his character. He is represented to me as a person truly venerable for his age, for his life, and conversation ; perfectly unambitious of every thing but doing good, and filling that station which he holds in life as becomes a preacher of the gospel ; covets not wealth, is inoffensive, mild and gentle in his manners, to which he joins the qualities of being industrious, sensible, eloquent.—It seems from Mr. B.'s letter, for I know nothing more of it than what he retails,\* that this same Dr. P. had delivered in a sermon, “ Those  
 “ who dislike that mode of worship which is  
 “ prescribed by authority ought, if they can  
 “ find no worship out of the church which they  
 “ approve, to set up a separate worship for  
 “ themselves ; and by doing this, and giving an  
 “ example

\* P. 15. the note.

“ example of a rational and manly worship,  
 “ men of weight, men of rank and literature  
 “ may do the greatest service to society and the  
 “ world.” This passage is highly displeasing to  
 our profound theologian Mr. B. and therefore  
 in his comment, he thus represents it: “ Dr.  
 “ Price,” says he, “ advises them to improve  
 “ upon non-conformity; and to set up each of  
 “ them a separate meeting-house, upon his own  
 “ particular principles. It is somewhat remark-  
 “ able, that this reverend divine should be so  
 “ earnest to set up new churches, and so per-  
 “ fectly indifferent concerning the doctrine  
 “ which may be taught in them. His zeal is  
 “ of a curious character. It is not for the pro-  
 “ pagation of his own opinions, but of any  
 “ opinions. It is not for the diffusion of truth,  
 “ but for the spreading of contradiction. Let  
 “ the noble teachers but dissent, it is no matter  
 “ from whom or from what.” But would it not  
 be more remarkable if a person possessing the  
 smallest abilities and the least candour should  
 thus misconstrue and misrepresent so plain a  
 passage. Dr. P. is conscious he preaches un-  
 der a toleration; from a sense of gratitude he  
 is desirous that this benefit may be extended to  
 all. Let all therefore who have the opportunity,  
 not being satisfied with the doctrines delivered  
 in

in one place resort to another more agreeable to his persuasion. I conceive this to be dictated by the spirit of toleration. If Dr. P. had said, I am the only teacher of true religion, and ye are inexcusable for not attending my lectures; he would then have breathed the spirit of arrogance mixed with intolerance, and Mr. B. if I mistake not, would have been one of the first to condemn him. And when he speaks in a language totally dissimilar, Mr. B. misrepresents and condemns. Why? Because Mr. B. in the plenitude of his perverseness is determined he shall be condemned. Long before I read that passage I entertained the like sentiment with Dr. P. No human authority can have a right to bend my conscience to his religion, because it cannot determine which system of religion is the purest; therefore, I say, let every man go as his conscience directs; not for the sake of opposition, but for conscience sake. Yet when men argue thus, Mr. B. may in his dogmatical tone tell us we are cants and hypocrites; but I would be glad to know how men who think and act otherwise can avoid not only the imputation, but the conviction, of cant and hypocrisy. Mr. B. throws all this cant, fraud, and hypocrisy into one scale; as though there were none to counterbalance it

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in the other, which would be extraordinary indeed, circumstanced as matters are, while such allurements are thrown out as are most likely to destroy all conscience in matters of religion.—If Mr. B. is charmed with these old gothic structures, let him sit there if he pleases till he contracts a tertian ; but why are others to be compelled to sit there chilling and freezing, under pain of being stigmatized as cants and hypocrites, and thus become a sacrifice to his wild extravagancies. Why are their sentiments to pass through the torturing fires of his misrepresentation and accounted a *scaccherum saturni* to poison mankind, while he is the porter to the old original warehouse for all kinds of nostrums—while, kill or cure, the profit is immense.

Here follows another instance of misinterpretation, and wilful it must be, for the sagacity of Mr. B. can never be so blunted as not to perceive what all the rest of the world can clearly understand. Dr. Price it seems had said somewhere, for I know no more of it than what I see in an extract made by Mr. B. in his letter,\* that “ a representation, chosen chiefly by the  
 “ Treasury, and a *few* thousands of the *dregs*  
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\* P. 82.

“ of the people, who are generally paid for  
 “ their votes.” On this passage Mr. B. makes  
 the following remark: “ You will smile here at  
 “ the consistency of those democratists, who,  
 “ when they are not on their guard, treat the  
 “ humbler part of the community with the  
 “ greatest contempt, whilst, at the same time  
 “ they pretend to make them the depositaries of  
 “ all power.”\* Mr. B. must surely imagine  
 his friend to whom he addresses his letter to be  
 the verriest dolt that ever existed, to think that  
 he should smile truly, while Mr. B. is imposing  
 on him by misrepresentation. The words of  
 Dr. P. are to be taken together as they stand  
 connected, “ the dregs of the people who are  
 “ generally paid for their votes;” and Dr. P.  
 with all other democratists never could dream  
 of making this venal tribe the depositaries of  
 power, but the objects of contempt and severe  
 punishment, and therefore he certainly is con-  
 sistent in thus exposing such infamous characters  
 to the scorn of mankind. In the interim I will  
 beg leave to submit to the consideration of Mr.  
 B.’s friend a remark or two much more just  
 than that of Mr. B. which is, that all demo-  
 cratists have a great and sincere regard for the  
 honest

honest and virtuous in the humbler or lower classes of the people ; they know they have power, all revolutions evince it ; as they have power they ought also to have some share in legislation were it merely with a view to policy, omitting justice, thereby soothing them to promote the general tranquility and preventing revolutions. In point of justice viewing them as men, they are intitled to it ; in a free country can any man who has not forfeited his right be excluded from a share in legislation ; it is contradiction in terms. And if we consider it with respect to taxation, here again his right is obvious ; not only *they* also pay taxes, but it will be found I presume on enquiry that those in this kingdom who have no share in legislation, pay as great a part of the taxes, as those who have. And lastly, as to the article of utility, no nation can exist without them. If Mr. B. is of opinion that a government charged with this and other striking partialities can be firm, stable, and durable, I must freely confess I differ from him in opinion, and tremble for the consequences arising from these masses of leaven which are maturing with time to burst forth in some dangerous fermentation ; to tell men of old constitutions, and forms and ceremonies, will then avail but little, and the wiser policy

is surely to labour at improvement and melioration while yet it is day, and the subject is capable of receiving the remedies, and the rulers of applying them with success. But obstinacy is not connected with reason, nor misrepresentation with candour; and Dr. P. has not said that the commonalty of the people are corrupt and venal, but that there are a few thousands of the dregs of the people, meaning, I suppose, the voters in many of our rotten boroughs, who being generally paid for their votes, are so. But Mr. B. because he happens to be himself pure and immaculate on the article of venality (which consists partly in accepting remuneration for professions of patriotism and the verbal service to one's country) cannot possibly imagine such voters, who also voted to serve their country, would receive for that service any reward; he concludes therefore that the supposition of Dr. P. is injurious, and comes forward to defend their cause by misrepresenting what Dr. P. had advanced; and instead of giving us Dr. P.'s own words concerning the infamous bribe alluded to, converts both the terms and the persons by saying, "the *humbler* part of the community." There are crafty jesuits in all countries, but they may be defied to exceed this manœuvre. I hope Mr. B.'s friend

friend is not so ignorant as to be deluded by this imposition on his understanding.

I am concerned Mr. B. should have given so much reason to complain that his letter, either from inadvertence, design, want of information; or from whatever cause it proceeds, is replete with misrepresentation; it would be an endless task to collect the several instances; I shall therefore advert only to one or two more.—That there were riots and excesses committed at Versailles on the 6th of October, 1789, no one denies, nor can any person in his senses approve of them; yet to a philosophic mind great allowance might be made for an intemperate and intoxicating draught of freedom taken by the populace, while the thirst occasioned by the fever of despotism was yet upon them. That these excesses were as great as represented by Mr. B. I have some reasons to doubt;\* nor was he there to prove his assertions. Improving on the report of others he forms his plaintive commiserating tale, ever partially adhering to one side of the question; whereas had he confined himself to the bare truth without embellishment, or had he explained

plained the *whole* transaction, much might have been adduced in mitigation. But then indeed the tale would have suffered considerably in the pathos, for which purpose it seems to have been principally calculated. If Mr. B. is really acquainted with the whole of that transaction, he will perhaps perceive that the following epitomized narration is pretty near the truth.—Some of the principals in the French revolution had received indubitable intelligence, that a plot was concerted to remove, or more properly to carry off the king from Versailles to Metz; they had the names of the chiefs concerned in the conspiracy against the state, together with a most minute account of all the progressive measures that were to be taken before and after that event, by an intercepted courier to a person whose name it is not necessary here to introduce. If the king was removed as proposed, the inevitable consequence was deemed to be a civil war carried on in the king's name against the people. The knowledge of this conspiracy was endeavoured to be concealed from the populace, and continued to be so for some time; while those who were in the secret, employed every precaution to defeat the intended removal and conspiracy, not divulging the motive of their proceedings lest coming to the

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the public ear the people should be too violently exasperated. A matter of such magnitude, and known to more than one person, would not be long hushed in silence ; those who had gained the intelligence divulged it to others, these communicated it again, and the whole was known in a short time to every person in Paris. Part of the populace, perhaps to the amount of thirty thousand, frantic on this report, without knowing for what purpose, and without any concerted design immediately rushed forwards to Versailles ; when they came there, having no fixed purpose, so they did nothing ; the night following all was quiet. But early on the next morning the king's body-guard who conceived themselves to be watched by the populace began to be out of humour, reflected on the populace for wearing the national cockade, which was followed by other provocations, and these from the other side were repented and returned. On this, one of the king's guard fired either a pistol or a musket among the populace whereby one of them was killed. The multitude enraged, assaulted the guards, who again fired upon them, and an action commenced. The guards were repulsed, and retreated to the palace ; the populace in their fury pursued them into the very apartments whither they

they had retreated sparing none, and cutting down every man they met.—That the populace had any the least premeditated design against the life of either the king or the queen, is a circumstance which I no more believe than I do that Mr. B. was present at the transaction ; I do not even suspect that they intended either of them the least violence.—The plain unsophisticated fact, and which has been artfully worked up to serve sinister purposes by exciting commiseration and affecting the passions of mankind to prejudice the revolution, is simply this: the populace of Paris ignorantly rushed forth to Versailles under the notion of preventing the king's escape ; when arrived, they behaved peaceably, till the guard imprudently fired upon them, and made themselves the aggressors ; retaliation succeeded, a general action commenced, the guards overpowered retreated, the enraged victors pursued and slaughtered them in the very recesses of the palace, from which the illustrious personages had fled ; inflamed with rage and vengeance for the insult received from the guards, they were determined if possible none should escape, and with their bayonets they pierced the queen's bed lest any of them should have taken refuge and concealment there.—This I trust is a plain but true narrative



narrative of that tranſaction, which from ſuch fact has been worked up into as arrant fiction as any of the tales in Ovid's Metarmorphoſes. But as I imagine mankind are not likely to give credit to ſuch fables, leſs occaſion is there to ſay more concerning it. I would not however in any thing I have ſaid be underſtood to applaud or even to countenance a ſingle action in this ſcene of rage, even when repreſented with candour : much leſs in that picture which has been given of it. The leſs men are acquainted with the circumſtances, the more ſhould they avoid deſcribing them. But in what eſtimation are we to hold thoſe who are acquainted with the whole but ſuppreſs a part for the purpoſe of deception, and thus work it up into a tale to play upon the paſſions by miſrepreſentation for ſiniſter views, and to caſt an odium on men and meaſures merely becauſe they do not quadrate with their whimſical fancies and caprices ; and to do this the more effectually paſs over whatever might tend to give true information, and in ſome meaſure extenuate theſe exceſſes ;

*Foibles amuſemens d'une douleur ſi grande ! \**

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From

\* Racine, Berenice.

From the same manufactory of misrepresentation we are instructed to vilify the donations of the French nation : but before the ridicule can be supposed to take place, we are to be led to imagine that such donations were intended as a substitute for 'taxes, or at least to make up for their deficiency.\* It appears to me that from pique nothing can be more disingenuously represented than these offerings of the people to the National Assembly ; nothing can be more wantonly ridiculed, more petulantly derided, or more puerilely construed. The " sapient " Mr. B. must surely know what all the world is acquainted with, that in all sacrifices the value of the offering is not the point to be attended to, but the mind, the disposition of him who makes the oblation which is thereby expressed. Neither hecatombs, nor temples could enrich Heaven ; and a salted cake was as acceptable, because the sentiment was equally displayed in the latter as by the former,

*Non sumptusâ blandior hostiâ  
Mollebit avaros penates  
Farre pio, et saliente mica.*

Hor. Od. xvii. lib. 3.

And

\* P. 57, 339, 340. et alibi.

And on this principle Horace says to Mæcenæ,

——— *Reddere victimas,  
Ædemque votivam memento :  
Nos humilem feriemus agnam.*

Hor. Od. xvii. lib. 2.

The trinkets and trifles so eagerly brought from every quarter, if we survey them with a view to national finance, perversely turning our eyes from the donors and the disposition which accompanied them to merely the things given, might be considered as insignificant unimportant bawbles. But to look on them in this light only betrays, in my apprehension, either a weak or mischievous habit of judging. The people indiscriminately pressed forward to make a sacrifice of such things they had at the altar of liberty in presence of the National Assembly, whom they looked up to as their deliverer from the iron arm of despotism. The proudest monarch in Europe might, and I trust would, glory in such a sacrifice. Compare these oblations, truly expressive of the feelings of the heart, with the frothy addresses where nothing of what is expressed is felt. Compare them with the fulsome flattery of courts and of lofty nobility, while it sinks into servile offices and abject compliances degrading to a private gentleman of

spirit. Compare them with the empty proffers of life and fortune obtained by artifice and published with ostentation, from persons who never intend to move so much as a finger in the cause they pretend to support. All, crafty impositions on monarchs, to excite in their minds visionary and and delusive dreams, ever to their injury, and sometimes to their ruin. On a comparison, that one is a real substance, the other a shadow. In France the holy flame of freedom darted from man to man, and in an instant like electrical fire pervaded every breast, nor is it within the circumscribed imagination of Mr. B. who "desires honours, distinctions, "and emoluments" though "but little," and who seems with a ghastly smile to put a perverse misconstruction on almost every thing that has been said or done by these revolutionists, to limit such a spirit, or to say what it will perform for the public good. Men who would not offer an atom of their property to the demon of despotism, may sacrifice their all to the deity of freedom: while he may lie looking out to foreign courts for exotic human deities propitiouly to smile on the oblation of his literary incense.

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The confiscation of church property in France seems also to hurt Mr. B. much ; but I who have nothing to hope or fear from any man, and am totally uninfluenced, will freely speak my mind on this business ; and ingenuously confess that the mode by which that property was acquired by the clergy, hurts me much more than their loss of it. In the acquisition, increase, detention, and disposal of it there was scarcely any species of art, artifice, and fraud that was left unpractised. To enrich the church, the timorous and weak in understanding among the laity, were as palpably and completely duped out of their property as they could be by any set of swindlers whatever. The priests were indefatigable in their pursuit of wealth, which they obtained from every quarter and by every mean. When princes were distressed and too feeble to resist, they bullied them out of their lands and forcibly kept possession ; when powerful, they gained their ends by flattery and adulation. They robbed the poor of the fund with which they were entrusted for their support, and for preserving the edifices of devotion which they left to fall into ruin, applying the money to their own avaricious or luxurious purposes. And in short, hardly any method was left unattempted by which they might arrive at wealth and power.

It may be said these are heavy charges. I answer, they are no more weighty than they are true; neither are they mine; they come from unquestionable authority. It is impossible for me in this place to go through the whole of this history; but I will epitomize so much of it as is necessary for my purpose and produce my voucher.

At the commencement of Christianity and so early as the times of the apostles, the preachers and the poor were supported by oblations, alms, and voluntary contributions of the faithful, which formed one stock to supply their respective necessities.\* These contributions in a short time became great from a prevalent opinion among Christians at that time, that a dissolution of the world, was at no great distance, and of course their property could not be better bestowed

*\* Dopo che Christo nostro Signore montò al Cielo li Santi Apostoli seguirono nella chiesa di Giernusalemme l'istesso istituto d'haver il danoro ecclesiastico per li due effetti sopradetti, cioè per bisogno delli ministri dell' Evangelio e per elemosine de poveri: e il fondo di questo danoro era similmente le oblationi delli fedeli, quali anco mettendo ogni loro haver in commune.*

F. Paoli Sarpi, delle Mat. Beneficiare, p. 6.

flowed than in alms.\* As by such liberal contribution the church was enriched, the bishops or pastors of the flock were no longer satisfied with remaining on their former footing, would live no longer in common, but separated, took a house for themselves, and had their allowance paid in money.† But the disorder did not close here, for they began to withhold from the poor their share of the alms, and to apply it fraudulently to their own use; laid out their money on usury; and wholly neglecting the duties of their function, devoted themselves to avarice.‡ As  
avarice

\* Erano molto pronti li christiani in quei primi tempi à spogliarsi delli beni temporali per impiegarli in elemosine, perche aspettavano di prossimo il fine del mondo travendoli Christo N. Signore lasciati in incerti, e quantunque fosse per durare quanto si volesse, non l'haveano per considerabile più, che se fosse all' hora per finire, tenendo per fermo, che la figura di questo mondo, cioè lo stato della vita presenti trapassa; perche ancor le oblationi sempre più s'aumentavano. Id. ib. p. 6—7.

† Doppo che le chiese furono fatte ricche, anco li clerichi cominciarono à vivere con maggior commodità, e alcuni non si contentando di quel vitto commune della chiesa quotidian, vòlsero vivere separatamente nella propria casa, e dalla chiesa haver la sua portione separatamente in danari ogni giorno ò per un mese continuo, e ancora per il più lungo tempo. Id. ib. p. 12.

‡ Non si fermo però in questo stato il disordine, ma incominciarono li vescovi à mancare delle solite elemosine alli poveri, e rilener per se

avarice has no bounds, they persevered in the spirit of accumulation, and from weak princes beguiled with the idea of devotion they now obtained permission to possess real estates.\* From this period avarice raged with these wretches, and every engine of art and artifice with complicated fraud was worked to enable them to seize on every species of property; the weak of all conditions and ranks, but principally widows and maidens, became their prey; by gift or testament the relation, the heir, and the orphan were swindled out of their inheritance; it was transferred to the church, which with insatiate hunger like the grave swallowed all, and still gaped

*se quello che dovea esser distribuito, e con li beni della chiesa comuni fatti riechi, faccendo anche delle usure per auresculi, e lasciando la cura dell' insegnare la dottrina di Christo, tutti si occupavano nell' avaritia. Id. ib. p. 12.*

\* *Massentio otto anni doppo restituì tutte le possessioni alla chiesa Romana, e poco doppo Constantino; e licinio concessa la liberta di religione alli christiani, e approvati li collegii ecclesiastici, che con voce Greca chiamavano chiese, concesse generalmente per tutto l'imperio, che potessero acquistare beni stabili cosè per donation, come per testamento, esentando ancora li clerichi dalle fattioni personali pubbliche, acciò potessero attendere più commodamente al servitio della religione. Id. ib. p. 14—15.*



gaped for more.\* The flagrancy of these iniquitous practices alarmed mankind, they had proceeded to so great a length as to be almost past redress; an edict came forth to repress and control them: but without effect.† And this was succeeded by another which absolutely forbade widows devoting themselves to the church from giving or bequeathing to it any moveables or immoveables of any value.‡ But neither these repressive edicts, nor any remonstrances could prevail on ecclesiastics from enriching themselves beyond

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\* Così avvenne nelli primi tempi doppo che la chiesa ottenne facoltà d'acquiesfare beni stabili, era creduto d'alcuni religiosi, che fesse servitio di dio privare li proprii figliuoli, a parenti per donare alle chiese, per ilche non tralasciavano arte alcuna per indur le Vedove, Donzelle, ed altre persone facili à privare le proprie case per lasciar alla chiesa. Id. ib. p. 18.

† Il disordine passò così presto li termini d'esser superato, che fù necessitato il principe di provvederci, e del 370 fù fatta la legge che se ben non privava le chiese d'acquiesfare assolutamente, prohibiva però a gle ecclesiastici l'andar in casa di Vedove, e pupilli, e il ricevere per donazione, o testamento alcuna cose dalle donne, non solo direttamente, ma ne anco per mezzo di terza persona; la qual legge S. Girolamo, confessa esser stata medicina per la corruzione entrata nelli clerici. Id. ib. p. 18.

‡ Poce anni dopo, cioè dell 390 fù fatto un' altra legge, che la Vedova, quale si dedicava alli servitii della chiesa non potesse donargli, o lasciargli per testamento beni stabili, o mobili pretiosi di casa. Id. ib. p. 19.

the bounds of all reason.\* Possessing great opulence and power they interfered in what did not concern them; they not only traded, and were exempted from all duties; † but on a rebellion of cities against the emperor they headed them, and seized on the rights and royalties of the crown, which they would never relinquish, so that in the conclusion they remained with them as fiefs, whence several of the bishops derive their titles, ‡ which they maintain to this day;

\* *Ma con tutti i freni possi dalli Santi Padri con le buone esortationi, e delli Principi con le buone leggi, non si potè però fare che li beni ecclesiastici non crescessero sopra il dovere.* Id. ib. p. 20.

† *Ritrovassi nel Codice Theodosiano una legge di constantino de 359 che esenta lillerici musanti dal pagar datio.* Id. ib. p. 23.

‡ *Nelle turbe, che successero per le cause sudette molte città sollevate dalli Vescovi confederati col Papa si ribellorono dall' Imperatore, e li Vescovi se ne fecero Capi, onde ottennero anco le pubbliche entrate, e le ragioni regie; e quando le differenze si composero haveano preso così fermo possesso, che fù necessitato il Principe conceder loro in feudo quelle, che de facto si erano usurpato, onde anche acquistorno li titoli di Duchi, Marchesi, Conti, come molti ne sono in Germania, che restano anco tali, & in nome, & in fatti, ed in Italia di nome solo, il che fece ecclesiastici gran quantità di beni secolari e fù aumento molto notabile, non solo uelle turbe di che habbiamo parlato, mà in quelle ancora, che seguirono sotto gl' Imperatori Suezvi.* Id. ib. p. 102, 103.—Nor is what is advanced confined to Germany alone; the like took place in France, and it was purely on account of these fiefs that the French bishops were obliged to attend in the holy wars as they are called.

day; for according to the practice of all invaders and usurpers, they set up long possession in opposition to a right and just title; *missum disceptatorem a Claudio agrorum, quos regis Apionis quondam habitos, et populo Romano cum regno relictos, proximus quisque possessor invaserant diuternaque licentia et injuria, quasi jure et acquo, nitebantur*;\* so that in fact they were obtained and maintained by violence and fraud.

Possessing such wealth, without considering at this moment by what means it was acquired, I am not in the least surprized when I am informed that the necessitous heathen emperors occasionally laid their fingers on church treasures; and this the rather if they vouchsafed themselves, or any one for them, to look into the New Testament, where they could not fail of observing that the author of the Christian religion renounces all claim to the wealth† of this world, expressly informs the preachers of his gospel, that they are to claim no more of this world than is expedient to supply their ne-

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cessities;

\* Tacit. Ann. lib. xiv. sect. 18.

† My kingdom is not of this world. John, ch. xviii. ver. 36; and to the same effect in many other passages of the gospels.

cessities;\* that some of the† apostles in their epistles to the pastors remind them of the same doctrine, and that being supplied with these necessities they are to be therewith content. The heathen emperors therefore on seeing a doctrine so plain, clear, and express, thus scandalously transgressed by these ecclesiastics, would consider them in no better light than a set of deceivers, and therefore proper object of plunder and punishment. If ye will adhere, might they say, to the laws of the religion ye profess, go on unmolested, for we discover nothing in it that counteracts our authority; it will render you modest and humble men, the friends of morality, virtue, and temperance. But ye have thrown aside your law, far exceeded all the limits prescribed you by your religion, and grossly violated the commands of its author, which indicates that ye have either no belief, or  
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\* Luke, ch. x. ver. 7, 8.

† And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.—But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Paul, 1 Tim. ch. vi. ver. 8, &c. And to the same purpose in innumerable passages of the Testament.

no principle; and as there is no human power that can or will repress this licence, we will make your crimes subservient to our necessities, and for punishment will take from you that which by the law of your religion you have no right to acquire or possess.\* I cannot therefore blame the emperor Decius, whatever ecclesiastics may do, for sending an officer to St. Lawrence, as he is called, a superintendent of church treasures, with the message: *Quod Cæsaris scis Cæsari da, nempe justum postulo; ni fallor, haud ullam tuus signal Deus pecuniam.*† The true meaning of which is, “Your church hath  
 “ amassed great riches which by the law of your  
 “ religion you cannot possess, therefore resign  
 “ them, to Cæsar who may possess and now  
 “ wants them; your lawgiver laid no claim to  
 “ such

\* An emperor, though a heathen, who should reason after this manner, would not express himself very differently from what St. Ciprian is reported to have said: *Con li beni della chiesa fatti ricchi, facendo ancor delle usere per accresculi, e lasciando la cura dell' insegnare la dottrina di Cristo, tutti si occupavano nell' avaritia, le quale cose S. Cipriano piange, che nel suo tempo fossero usate, e conclude, che per purgare la sua chiesa da questi errori Dio punirebbe quella gran persecutione.*

F. Paolo Sarpi, delle M. Benef. p. 12.

† That is, “What you know to be Cæsar's give to Cæsar;  
 “ I ask no more than is just, for if I mistake not, your God  
 “ coins no money.” This is recorded by Prudentius.

“ such things nor suffered you to do so, but  
 “ said, render unto Cæsar the things which are  
 “ Cæsar’s, and unto God the things which are  
 “ God’s, that is, your devotions, and meddle  
 “ not with what does not concern you.”\*—  
 Where is the impropriety of it? That wealth,  
 provided he were a good emperor, was certainly  
 better deposited in his hands for the benefit of  
 the state, than to remain the treasure of eccle-  
 siastics, contrary to religion, and probably to be  
 employed to pernicious purposes.

I may be told in the reasoning of Mr. B.  
 that supposing all to be true which has been ad-  
 vanced concerning the quantity of this wealth,  
 and the mode of acquiring it, yet those persons  
 in France, who on the Revolution are dispos-  
 sessed, are not the persons who committed these  
 artifices and frauds. True, but they are the  
 successors of those who so possessed themselves  
 of that property; and the successors of those  
 who

\* It is observable, that at these times the church was always  
 very charitable; for it no sooner had intimation of these de-  
 signs, than it distributed largely to the poor, lest their wealth  
 should fall into the hands of the emperors. When they could  
 no longer keep it, they recollected where it ought to have  
 gone; but so long as they could grasp it, their memory failed  
 them.

who were so duped now recover them from those unjust possessors. Possession is not right, and it is the constant practice, as I have above observed, for invaders and usurpers to set up a long unjust possession in opposition to a just claim and title. What is obtained by fraud or force is always in justice recoverable; and no man or set of men are to be benefited by their iniquity, nor ought their successors to reap the advantage.

But even supposing this property had not been obtained by indirect means, yet I see no reason why the nation might not dispossess them. It had hitherto been appropriated to particular persons for particular purposes in the nature of a salary, but which was rather converted into pension; and if such men and such purposes were no longer necessary, or if only a certain number of them were deemed expedient, the state had a right to discharge the remainder, and to apply the residue of such salary or pension to the public necessity. Is a state under obligation to keep up all its old forms, appointments, ceremonies, when they become useless, injurious, or too expensive? If so, the admission of any pension becomes extremely dangerous, for when once granted it must remain

main a burthen on the people for ever; and on this principle I do not see how our ancestors could be justified in changing the religion of the country and making it protestant, for not only doctrines, but appointments, forms, ceremonies, and old establishments were totally reversed or superseded. In short, such quaint reasoning carried to its extent would preclude all improvement of every kind in every state.

Before a religious or church establishment in any state can be pleaded, it might first be proper to show that such men are absolutely necessary to promote religion, and that religion cannot be duly promoted without them. This point which by some means or other is generally taken for granted, I cannot admit till it has been properly discussed. In our own country as I have before observed, we have a religious sect among whom are no priests; yet I presume no person of candour will say, that in point of moral and religious principles, which are to be determined by their effect, that is, by life and conversation, that these persons are inferior to those of any establishment whatever. This admitted, for I trust it cannot be denied, here then is an instance to prove that priests are not absolutely necessary to promote religion,



gion, and that religion may be properly promoted without priests.—At first and originally I grant this might not be the case; but when once the gospels were written and dispersed, I do not see that these men became any longer absolutely necessary. Perhaps it may be objected, that the sect adverted to is but comparatively small to the rest of christendom. But I see no reason if this sect in different parts of the world can maintain good order and affectually promote religion without priests, why all the rest of christendom might not do the same; for the whole body of christians is made up of smaller communities, each of which might do the like. But to those who improperly would make numbers an obstacle, it may be recommended that they take a view of the mahometans, among whom there are no priests; yet no men entertain a more fervent zeal for their religion (true or false is not here the question); nor do any persevere with more vigour in prayer, in fasting, and a long train of incumbrances and severities attending it, without having so much as a single priest to exhort or incite them. If therefore so much is performed without priests in a religion admitted by all christians to be false, what might not be effected in like manner by christians in a religion that

is true ? But such active vigour can never be the produce of establishments, for in establishments the priest has an appointment for a certain duty, which he claims whether he performs that duty or not ; the duty therefore is generally much neglected ; and the common people especially being taught in the business of religion to rely solely on the priest, they become habitually satisfied with his neglect, which concludes in a torpor of supineness and indifference. Hence in all establishments there is little of the essence of religion, but instead of it occasional form, ceremony, show and parade, sufficient to announce that it is not wholly dead though it be enervated and motionless.—This is no favourable picture of establishments, but I fear it is a true one. If true, there certainly can be no necessity for such establishments, and especially as I think it has been made appear that religion may flourish without priests, at least as well as with them.—The consideration I grant is important and deserves attention ; but on a strict and candid enquiry I trust it will be discovered that interest, rather than religion, is the basis of all religious state establishments.—It is a tender case, and too delicate perhaps to be proposed to those who enjoy such emoluments ; besides, the time is improper while in health

health they embrace them: but I could wish to have the sentiments, after due reflection, of a sensible person on this subject immediately on his departure from this world to another, when probably gibes and prevarication would yield to sincerity and truth, on finding he could no longer shun the place

“ Where friends and foe  
 “ Lie close; unmindful of their former feuds.  
 “ The lawn-rob’d prelate, and plain presbyter  
 “ E’er while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,  
 “ Familiar mingle here, like sister-streams  
 “ That some rude interposing rock had split.”

The Grave, by Blair.

But waving a subject so truly serious, can any man in his senses imagine that the French legislators are not as competent as Mr. B. who officiously intrudes himself, to determine the number of priests necessary for the purposes of religion in their own country, and what ought to be their stipend or appointment? That person surely is an object of pity who being possessed by the spirit of interference engages himself in the concerns of others without an adequate knowledge to sanction the intrusion. It may be alleged that humanity calls forth Mr. B. to plead the cause of so many distressed objects on being discharged from their appoint-

ments and functions. It is with reluctance I would call any man's humanity into question; but if an impartial reader will go over his letter he must meet with so many striking passages\* of a spirit diametrically opposite to humanity, to good nature, to delicacy, to decency in the treatment of particular persons, and such a license given to invective both in sentiment and expression, as cannot fail to shock their feelings, while virulence plucks up humanity by the roots to burn it on the altar of malignity. But let us pass over the misnomer, and say these outrages were the effusions of humanity. What then? Does not every one know that in all great revolutions there must be sufferers? were none to suffer, there would have been no need of a revolution, all things being as they should be, right; whereas the intention of a revolution is to reform what is wrong: and it is impossible that in such violent and extensive agitations but that some must receive even an unmerited shock. In cases less formidable than revolutions, the like occurs for the benefit of the state; I can remember when in our own country, in a time too of profound peace and tranquility,

\* P. 11, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63, 67, 77, 78, 99, 100, 101, 102, 106, 108, 114, 115, 135, and a variety of other passages, as 158, 159, &c.

quility, many hundred of very reputable citizens were by a single act of parliament thrown out of that business in which they had expended much time and money for instruction, and were in an instant almost turned adrift to seek a livelihood as they could, while neither the legislature nor the rest of mankind conceived that this was in any wise amiss, or thought of making them any compensation.\* The French church was surcharged with an unnecessary number of clergy of all denominations; and in the distress of the state, (or even were there no such distress) there could be no reason why opulent indolence should consume in luxury the children's inheritance. The useless hands were therefore dismissed, and as many as were judged useful and necessary, retained, and on competent salaries, by which the interests of religion would be much better promoted than by supplying them with the means of luxury to be employed to the neglect of their function, and the setting the rest of mankind a bad and dangerous precedent by their example. But this prudence, I should rather say sagacity, is travestied by

\* Alluding to the act which caused the distillers, or rectifiers of malt spirits, almost all of them to a very small number to relinquish their business and shut up their stills throughout the kingdom.

by our author, and converted into a representation exhibiting cruelty and injustice,\* while to stimulate our sensibility we are, as I should think, ludicrously informed, that the church made to the state a voluntary offer of a large contribution.† That is, these holy men made an offer of *part* of those riches of which it fore-saw it would be dispossessed. But if the church on constraint was so wonderfully generous *now*, why was it not somewhat *voluntarily* generous *before*, and why did it not come forth like wise men to make their offerings? This clumsy artifice was therefore justly treated with contempt as a fabrication from the vile manufactories of avarice and deception. They would not relinquish any part of their luxuries but on compulsion though the state starved; the state they considered as nothing to them, but so far as they were gainers by making a property of it; and as to the duties of their office, the principle of which I understand to be preaching and praying, those of the higher orders among them had almost wholly declined, while many of them were neither from their learning nor mode of living adapted to such stations, but were stuck there like ostentatious escutcheons  
against

\* P. 156—158.      † P. 179.

against a church wall, not with any view to religion, but to indicate they belonged to some great families who through interest had procured them these lucrative and lazy appointments. To dismiss such men was surely not an act of cruelty, but of justice to religion and to the state ; and instead of complaining, they might be thankful that they were not sooner discharged not only as unprofitable, but as bad servants, who could give no account of their stewardships but such as directly tended to their condemnation, and the forfeiture of a property so constantly abused that its confiscation was become a measure absolutely requisite for the putting their order under better regulations both with regard to religion and the state. This is the light in which this confiscation of church property appears to me ; it meets with my hearty and sincere approbation, and I presume it will be applauded by every candid and impartial friend of mankind who has not resigned up his reason to be led away by sophistry and to be bewildered in chimerical rhapsodies, teeming with bigotted notions of the consecration of kingdoms,\* and the sacredness of church-land, and church-men,† to which with equal propriety

\* P. 136—137.      † P. 157.

priety might have been added their industrious indolence, the sanctity of their debaucheries, and the holiness of their vices.

But though in consequence of this confiscation of church property, opulent indolence and pampered oscitancy and ignorance have been sent empty away, and a mass of wealth which was constantly employed in imparting strength to the power of a foreign sovereign in the kingdom, is now directed to better purposes in the state, towards relieving its exigencies; yet as all who have been dismissed come not under that description, I could have wished some regard had been paid to such of them as had merit, by a provision allotted them according to their rank. But on reflexion, I find this was impracticable. Such a marked and partial distinction would have been a fresh source of exasperation. Most men conceive as highly at least of themselves as they do of others; therefore every man would have thought himself equally intitled, and on being refused might say, Is it not enough that you injure me, without adding insult to injury? It would also have been highly impolitic, for each person who was dismissed would not only conceive himself injured as an individual, but he would feel and resent



resent it for the whole body, and no charm of private gratuity would be able to stifle such resentment; to have given such gratuity therefore would have been like putting arms into their hands, which they would have employed in resisting their adversaries; and not to grant it, was of course providing for their own security. The National Assembly could not be unacquainted with the general character of this body of men; that it possesses a characteristic is not singular, whatever the particular character may be; most communities are so, from the largest to the smallest. Thus nations are characteristic, we speak without reserve of the *hauteur* of the Spaniard; punick faith was proverbial; in Virgil \* we read, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*; the Cretans are marked by Pault† as very deficient in point of veracity; and lastly, not to enter into useless enumerations, the name John Bull, which has been applied to us, or which we have applied to ourselves, characterizes the sturdy bluntness of our own countrymen. As nations are characteristic, so are smaller societies, and it would be not only unnecessary but invidious to explain what must occur to every one, especially in treating of smaller communities. Of

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\* Æn. ii. v. 49.

† To Titus, ch. i. v. 12.

that community however which is under consideration something must be said. Davila, the historian of the civil wars of France, and who cannot be supposed to cast unmerited reproach on the priests of his own persuasion, represents them as audaciously violent in support of their own cause or interest; no extremities confined them, nor would they be deterred by force or reason from obtaining their ends while the prospect afforded a glimpse of success. Their activity induced them to publish falsities from their pulpits to inflame the people.\* They scandalized in their preachments without respect to character or rank.† They filled the ears of the populace with inflammatory tales to fan the flames of civil discord.‡ And again, they thunder

\* *Le quali cose intonando da' pulpiti i loro predicatori, empiono il popolo di vano terrore, e d'acerbissimo odio contra alla persone del principe, e contra a' consiglieri, e favoriti suoi.*

Davila, delle Guerre Civ. di Francia. Lib. vii. p. 446.

† *Entrava egli molte volte in pensiero di castigare la temerità di costoro, e di vendicarsi così dello sprezzo, che mostravano i predicatori, parlando in publico della persona sua, come delle congiurationi di questi sollevatori del popolo, che li avevano rivoltati contra la maggior, e più confidente città del regno suo, mà molte cose lo ritenevano. Id. ib. lib. viii. p. 513.*

‡ *Ed i predicatori con le maniere solite, mà con maggior licenza parlando apertamente delle cose presenti, empivano.* L'orecchie del

††.

der from their pulpits the eulogies of their favourites for the same purpose; exciting the populace to ferocity and revenge.\* Their preachments probably, but certainly the advise of some of their orders, instigate, not merely to common murther, but even to regicide;† and the at-

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tempt

*popolo delle maraviglie, anzi de' miracoli, cosè li chiamavano, di questo nuovo Gedeone, venuto al mondo per la desiderata salvezza della Francia. Id. ib. lib. ix. p. 570.*

\* *Intonarono i predicatori da' pulpiti la medesima sera, ed il giorno seguente, le lodi del martirio del Duca di Guisa, e le detestazioni della strage commessa crudelmente dal Rè, di modo, che gli animi non solo della infima plebe, mà anco de' più conspici trà i cittadini restarono ingombrati dalle loro ragioni ed accesi di grandissimo desiderio di farne la vendetta; il quale ardore, e ne' predicatori, e nel popolo si raddoppiò quando spragiuuse la nuova della morte del Cardinale, la quale finè di ridurre gli animi all' ultima efferatione. Id. ib. lib. x. p. 4.—Havere con pazienza inaudita tollerate l' ingiurie de' popoli, le invettive de' predicatori, le villane insolenze de' fattiosi, i decreti temerarii della Sorbona. Id. ib. lib. x. p. 23. I predicatori, benchè molto caduti di animo, e di riputatione, attendevano ad inanimire il popolo, il quale manifestamente si vedeva mesto, ed avvilito. Id. ib. lib. x. p. 49.*

† *Giacopo Clemente dell' ordine di San Domenico—ò guidato dalla propria fantasia, ò stimolato dalle predicationi, che giornalmente sentiva fare contra Henrico di Valois nominato il persecutore della fede, ed il tiranno; prese resolutione di voler pericolare la sua vita per tentare in alcuna maniera d'ammazzarlo, nè tenne segreto questo così temerario pensiero, mà andava vociferando trà suoi, che*

tempt was made with all coolness and deliberation, by plunging a knife into the king's body,\* of which wound he died soon after; yet the preachers applauded the assassination, and commended in high terms, from their pulpits. the  
 assassins.

*era necessario d'adoperare l'armi, e di estermiare il tiranno—disse ad un padre de' suoi, che haveva una inspiratione gagliarda di andare ad amazzare Henrico di Valois, e che dovesse consigliarlo, se la dovesse eseguire. Il padre conferito il fatto con il priore, il quale era uno de' principali consiglieri della lega, risposero unitamente, che vedesse bene, che questa non fosse una tentatione del demonio, che digiunasse ed orasse, pregando il Signore che gl' illuminasse la mente di quello doveva operare. Tornò frà pochi giorni costui al priore, ed al altro padre, dicendo loro, che haveva fatto quanto gli havevano consigliato, e che sentiva più spirito che mai di volere intraprendere questo fatto. I Padri, come molti dissero, conferito il negotio con Madama di Momperfier, ò come vogliono quei della lega, di proprio loro motivo l'esortarono al tentativo, affermandoli, che vivendo sarebbe stato fatto Cardinale, e morendo per haver liberata la città, ed ucciso il persecutore della fede, sarebbe senza dubbio canonizzato per Santo. Id. ib. lib. x. p. 50, 51.*

*\* Introdotto il Frate, mentre si ritirava amendue a canto ad una finestra, porse la lettera del conte di Brienna, la quale letta haben dogli detto il Rè, che seguitasse a spiegargli il suo negotio, egli finse di metter mano ad un'altra carta per presentarla, e mentre il Rè intentamente l'aspetta, cavatosi il solito coltello dalla manica, lo ferè a canto, all' umbelico della parte sinistra, e lasciò tutto il ferro confitto nella ferita. Id. ib. lib. x. p. 52.*

assassin.\* Fired with such zeal in support of their interests, we are not to be surprized that they excited the people to take arms, nor even that they themselves bore them.† Nor yet that they should grant absolution for known deliberate murder,‡ which however his holiness would

\* *Trà i quali il Padre Edmondo Borgio priore di Frati di San Domenico, il quale convinto da testimonii d'haver lodato pubblicamente in pergamena l'omicidio commesso nelle persona de Rè, e d'haver consigliato, ed instigato il percussore, comparandolo anco dopo il fatto nelle sue prediche a Giudit, il Rè morto ad Oloferne, la città liberata a Betulia, fù per sentenza de parlamento di Turs sentenziato a essere da quattro cavalli sbranato, le membre abbruciate, e sparse le ceneri al vento.* Id. ib. lib. x. p. 68.—*E. Padre Roberto Franciscano, che haveva quivi pubblicamente lodato la morte del Rè, e sollevata con le sue predicationi la plebe, furono condannati allo morte.* Id. ib. lib. x. p. 90.

† *Monsignore di Reno facendo ufficio di mastro di campo generale scorreva per ogni luogo, e i preti, e i frati concorrendo alle fattioni militari popolarmente, havevano prese l'armi.* Id. ib. lib. x. p. 49.—*Edrviso in più bande, secondo la divisione dei quartieri, s'appresentava volenteroso e pronto a tutte le fattioni, e con l'esempio de' Preti, e de' Frati, i quali armati salivano le muraglie, e s'adoperavano in tutte le cose con ammirabile costanza.*

Id. ib. lib. xi. p. 147.

‡ *Per la qual cosa, se bene in virtù di un Breve concessoli dal papa presente pochi mesi prima, di potersi far assolvere di ogni cosa riservato dal j. suo confisore, si haveva fatto dare l'assoluzione della morte del cardinale, nondimeno vedendo che questo non bastava, spedi Claudio d'Angene della famiglia sua favorita di Rhamburghetto Vescovo di Mans, uomo di profonda letteratura, e di singular eloquenza, acciuchè informato di tutte le ragioni, come suo procuratore ricercasse l'assoluzione de l'ontifice.* Id. ib. lib. x. p. 17.

would not confirm but on political considerations and advantages.\* The zeal of the prelates was also of a similar complexion; against the remonstrances, not even the threatenings of his holiness, nor the cause of religion had any weight, when they found it was more conducive to their interest to join the party of the king; at the same time intimating that there were seasons when the earnest wishes of his holiness might be complied with, but that it was unreasonable to expect it now that his majesty's affairs

\* Non havendo mai havuta intentione d'offendere la giurisdizione della sedea Apostolica, dopo che gli n' era stata fatta coscienza, mosso da interno scrupolo, s'era prostrato a' piedi del confessore, e havea chiesta e impetrata l'assoluzione, perquanto facesse bisogno, benchè stimasse de non haver effettivamente trasgredito. A questo rispose il pontefice, che il breve era concesso per le cose passate, mà che non si poteva estendere a' peccati futuri de' quali non si può anticipare l'assoluzione—Essendo sì molte volte repetita, e con giunte allegationi d'autorità e di ragioni, discussa questa trattatione, finalmente gli ambasceatori condiscersers a contentarje a dimandar in iscritto l'assoluzione del papa, il quale mostrava desiderarla, e per mezzo di essi dover restar placato e soddisfatto; per la qual cosa dopo gli uffici passati da gli ambasciatori di Venezia e di Ferrara a favore del Rè, che se ne affaticavano sommamente per ordine de' loro prencipi il vescovo con supplica estesa in forma di molta sommessione dimandò al pontefice l'assoluzione, il quale con parole piacevoli rispose, che volentieri l'harebbe concessa, quando fosse stato sicuro della contritione del Rè, della quale voleva questo segno, che potesse in libertà il cardinale di Borbone, e l'Arcivescovo di Lione.

affairs were in so prosperous a situation.\*—In what has been here advanced the reader will be pleased to take notice that it is not I who speak, the authorities are given, and the words of the author; in doing which a few passages only are selected from a great variety of the same tendency: but these are sufficient to give some idea of the description of those persons in the general, with which the National Assembly had to deal when it confiscated church property. It is in vain to tell us that I have been speaking of persons who lived two centuries ago. I answer, that I have been treating of communities which  
 existed

\* *Consideravano i Signori Francesi esser cosa non solo difficile, mà da non sperarla per alcun modo, che i prelati e la nobiltà, i quali havevano nelle mani del Rè la roba, le dignità, e le prelature risolvessero d'abbandonarle per compiacere il papa, essendo pochi a i tempi presenti coloro che per rispetto dell'anima si contentino di abandonare le loro sostanze; ch'essi già da principio s'erano d'avvantaggio reffigurate queste minaccie, e queste intimazioni di Roma, s'havevano preparato gli animi per soffrirle; che più che si sforzassero, più s'indurerebbono, e perdendo la speranza d'essere ricevuti mai in gratie del papa, si farebbono più ostinati a seguitare, ed a procurare la vittoria alla loro parte; che bisognava allettarli, e assiramenti tirarli, non spaventarli, e metterli nell'ultima disperatione; che simil minaccie farebbono proprie d'opra la vittoria per dare loro colore ed occasione di abbandonare con questo pretesto il Rè, quando le cose sue fossero deperate, e non bora, ch'essendo egli florido e potente, non era da credere, si alcuno lo abbandonasse. Id. ib. lib. xii. p. 221.*

existed from that time, till this event ; that communities rarely, if ever, lose their original character, that they had maintained the same character for many centuries before, and that two centuries is a very short period with respect to communities for divesting themselves of their original character. I am ready to admit they may undergo some variation in the *degree*, but still the same character remains though in a different degree ; but that degree cannot be ascertained till opportunity presents them the power of acting. As the National Assembly had determined to establish the revolution, it could not leave the church property in these hands, nor could it safely pension such of them as had merit, nor could it do otherwise than dissolve these societies. While connected, they were a formidable body acting by one will ; and as their function established an intercourse with all ranks and degrees, they might be highly dangerous to the revolution ; to have left in their hands property of any kind, which is only another name for power, would have increased the danger ; so that confiscation and dismissal, if the revolution was to stand on a firm basis, became absolutely necessary and unavoidable : and I persuade myself the revolution would have had much more to apprehend from these men if

continued



continued in their former state, than from all their other adversaries combined together. But I shall add nothing more, than that if the revolution was to stand, these men must fall.

As Mr. B. has opened to us a spacious field, and well stocked, I shall now decline this pursuit for some other game, and endeavour in the poet's phrase to "shoot folly as it flies;" "we look up," says he, "with awe to kings:"\* Some persons may think it a misfortune, this doctrine was not promulgated before Beckford went up with his petition; for awe was so far from his thoughts, that after delivering it he stood reasoning and remonstrating; as the scroll to his statue testifies to this day; and as that statue was erected at the expence of the city of London, it evinces that this doctrine of awe was not known and practised there at that time.—

Let us take a candid view of the history of kings, and see if their general character does not excite in us something of a very different complexion from awe. Is Mr. B.'s memory treacherous, or does he mean to mock mankind; his own doctrine on this subject formally delivered, puts every thing in the shape or sem-

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blance

blance of awe wholly out of the question; we cannot entertain awe for those who have so little regard to their own character as to delight in “mean company;” we may behold such objects with pity, but he who entertains pity is superior to awe.—It was observed at page 74 of this work, that Mr. B. had improved upon ancient ethics and had favoured the world with a new doctrine; he here comes forward as an additional apostle, or one improving on the old standard; for the words of the apostle are in all my editions “Fear God, honour the king;”\* but Mr. B.’s doctrine is, “Fear God, stand in awe of kings:” awe or dread implies fear in the excess; so that by this doctrine of Mr. B. our submission to kings is greater than that which is due to God himself. No one the least acquainted with the English language will assent, that fear and awe are convertible terms; but were they so, even then our author places God and kings on the same parallel. Without affecting a nicer conscience or more religion than every person ought to possess, Mr. B. will excuse me if I cannot pledge him in this “cup of abomination”† and idolatry. With the character of a courtier, agreeably to Montesquieu’s description,

\* 1 Peter, ch. ii. v. 17.      † P. 156.

description, it may be compatible ; or it may be consistent with the ideas of those who “ desire “ honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but “ little,”\* to hold forth this draught to mankind and ingratiate themselves with those who have these trumperies at their disposal ; but such as have a sense of their duty to heaven, and who claim little more than *mens sana in corpore sano*, and which kings have not to bestow, will dash this irreligious cup to the ground with horror, leaving the impious dregs to be licked up with the dust by reprobates.

Knowledge, even that small portion of it that can be acquired, is the fruit of much labour, observation, time and experience ; the station, modern education, and mode of life of princes, rarely supplies them with any tolerable share of it. Hence flatterers, their greatest enemies, make them an easy prey ; and the softer the matter they have to work upon, the deeper is the impression. If there is no political vice in the character of a prince, great allowance ought to be made for deficiencies, which are rather a failure than a fault. But not one grain of lenity is due to their flatterers who taking advantage

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of

\* Pult.

of their foibles, and with a view to private emolument, would endeavour to persuade them they are, what they are not. A good king, and a wise one, are two distinct beings ; I prefer a good, to a wise king ; because goodness of heart is likely to be more beneficial to the people than the goodness of the head, which often leads both themselves and others into perilous difficulties,\* while from the former there flows a constant and full stream of tranquility and beneficence. The perfect character is to be wise and good, but this is a character we have no right to expect ; and when it does come, it should be considered as a prodigy : if he be but good I honour him ; my duty demands it ; and it would be unjust and ungenerous, not to say folly and weakness, considering the many disadvantages under which he labours ; or rather the many opportunities of which he is deprived, to expect to see a king wiser than the rest of mankind. The treasure of wisdom was never intended to be the possession of all

\* Charles the First had the *reputation* of being a wise prince, but his wisdom tended to nothing so effectually as to embroil him with his subjects, and to be productive of a fatal end to himself ; and he died a *martyr* to his wisdom or obstinacy.— I could point to one or two more *reputed* wise sovereigns in Europe, whose wisdom centered in lavishing the blood and treasure of their subjects. But the criterion of a good prince are peace, harmony, beneficence.

all men ; but it is expected of all men that they should be good, and all men have wisdom enough, though not the will, to be good.— Therefore I honour a king if he be but good, but I do not look up with awe to any king but the King of Heaven. From a bad king I avert my sight, as from a thing that is odious and insufferable ; because he has it in his power to be good ; his station in a particular manner requires it of him ; and his not being so, will most probably be productive of the greatest mischief. This lesson, perhaps, will be acceptable to few of them ; but I trust it is more ingenuous than any they are likely to meet with in the whole range of their courtiers ; and happy may such be who attend to it.

Before we relinquish this subject it is necessary to advert to a passage in Mr. B.'s letter, which as it seems to contain some latent meaning, it may be proper to call it forth to public view and examine it. He says " Our constitution  
 " has made no sort of provision towards render-  
 " ing him (the king) as a servant, in any de-  
 " gree responsible." \* Does Mr. B. here mean to say that our kings are not responsible ; or, does he employ the words " as a servant" for a  
 disguise

\* P. 42.

disguise or subterfuge, thereby meaning, that he is not responsible *as a servant*,\* but yet he is responsible. If the latter be his meaning, it is nothing better than a petty quibbling about terms, and by which the fact is no wise affected. Now he either is responsible, or he is not so. If he is responsible, he is so to some person, or some body of men, for it would be ridiculous to affirm that a person is responsible, and yet that there are none to whom he is so; and if he be but responsible, it is wholly immaterial under what character or appellation, whether as a servant, agent, or under any other name. The question therefore is, Is he responsible? and this Mr. B. though he starts the subject, endeavours to evade by misleading us, affirming that he is not responsible *as a servant*, which determines nothing concerning his responsibility in any other character;

\* The author of *Anti-Machiavel*, whom no one doubts was the late King of Prussia, in speaking on this subject, says, *Le Souverain, Lien loin d'être le maitre absolu des peuples qui sont sous sa domination, n'en est que le premier Magistrat.* Anti-Mach. ch. i. p. 2. “The Sovereign, very far from being the absolute master of the people under his government, is but their ‘chief magistrate.’” And I must confess I understand all magistrates, though in different degrees, to be the servants of the public. But all this is no more than cavilling about terms: for the fact is, that each is responsible, under whatever denomination he holds a trust.

character ; and we want to know whether he is at all responsible, because that insinuation seems to be held forth rather as implying that he is not. Now to clear up this matter, if it be asserted that he is not responsible, I would wish to know how James the II<sup>d</sup> came to flee this kingdom ; was not his reason for so doing, because he was convinced that he was responsible, and he would not wait the event of becoming accountable for his actions. Again, if kings are not responsible, with what propriety can Mr. B. say, “ The punishment of tyrants is a noble and awful act of justice.”\* But how so, and where is the justice ? for though a tyrant, he is still a king ; none I presume will deny that Henry the VIII<sup>th</sup> was a tyrant, nor will they deny he was a king ; as being a tyrant therefore does not destroy the title and character of king, and kings are not responsible, where is the justice of this punishment. It is not meant surely to punish without calling to account. If you mean to call them to account, you have no right to do so ; how can you call to account him who is not responsible ; and if you call him to account, and punish, it is an act of injustice, because he is not responsible. And lastly, to say that a king is

\* P. 123 and 157.



is not responsible, is only in other terms to assert that he is despotic. If a king is not responsible, he may certainly act and do whatever he pleases; and in the three following descriptions of men I would gladly be informed where is the difference between a prince who acts and does whatever he pleases, a prince who is not responsible, and a despotic prince; the only difference is in the letters and sound of the terms, while in fact each and all of them imply one and the same thing: for he that is not responsible, may act and do what he pleases, with impunity; can any despotic prince do more? As this subject started by Mr. B. appears to be clogged with a hesitation, or rather a false bias has been given to it, I judged it advisable to guard all parties from error by giving it a discussion, the result of which is, that every prince who is not responsible is despotic; and as there is no despotic power in this country, the prince therefore is responsible.——There is another maxim nearly allied to this subject, I speak not of it as coming from Mr. B. but as the affinity is so great, it should not be passed over in silence; it is included in these six important words, The king can do no wrong. This maxim appears to me to have been fabricated by perfidious or flattering statesmen. I would it were as true, as it  
is



is false. A king may do much wrong, much evil ; I have it not in my nature to deny what fact and experience daily evince ; and this he may do with or without the advice of counsellors ; and to say that, for what is so done by their advice, they alone are responsible, is as unjust and partial a determination as the <sup>^</sup>mixim itself is false, because it tends at most to the punishing of a part only instead of the whole ; but generally ends in the punishment of none, as they elude their deserts by their power and influence, and that of those connected with them in the mischief.—By a similar description of men, for they abound in all courts, and in times of ignorance, which is their only excuse, they wrested from the King of Heaven his attributes and titles, disposed of them to a mere mortal, and hailed him “ Sovereign Lord the King ;” \* as though by this profane sporting with titles, he had in the instant changed his nature, and put on immortality. To these *human* divinities the deluded populace led on by artful parasites, and bigotted priests, might “ look up with awe,” and entertain a veneration for them, similar to that which the vulgar among the heathens expressed for their deities, though contaminated

X

with

with all the vices that can blot, deface, and degrade human nature. But it is to be presumed that since those days of ignorance the prince, the priest, and the people, have undergone a compleat transmutation by the alchemy of the times: if not, I trust that old alchemist will not desist from his labours till the transmutation is perfect.

Mr. B. complains of falacies concealed under terms employed by others, " It would require," says he, " a long discourse to point out to you the  
 " many fallacies that lurk in the generality and  
 " equivocal nature of the terms *inadequate re-*  
 " *presentation.*"\* But of all didactic writers I ever read, no one to the best of my recollection ever used terms in so vague and indeterminate a manner as Mr. B. I do not remember that he employs one definition, though he uses terms in a manner very different from the rest of mankind, and in a mode which appears to me exceptionable. I am led to this observation by the following passage, " I shall only say here  
 " in justice to that old-fashioned constitution,  
 " under which we have long prospered."† I would willingly understand what it is he meant  
 should

\* P. 83.      † P. 83.

should be understood by the terms “ old-fashioned constitution,” and, “ we have long prospered ;” if he means, that system of laws and original mode of government used in this kingdom, I should answer, they are no more, but in a manner totally done away, and are so continually changing and fluctuating that the traces of what he adverts to are hardly to be found. Let us take a transient view of our prosperity under what he calls the old-fashioned government or constitution, by which we have been so long prosperous down to the present hour. Not to go too far back, we may first observe the people were reduced to the dreadful necessity of dispatching one king, and of expelling another ; in the reign of George the first there was a deeply concerted rebellion to deprive him of the throne ; and in the succeeding reign there was another, when the rebels entered England and put the whole kingdom into a consternation.—Either that old-fashioned constitution is not retained, or we are not altogether so prosperous under it, or both ; while for annual parliaments, we have now septennial ones ; for a few laws which inflicted capital punishment, the number is now almost innumerable ; the excise laws which are daily increasing have trampled down and almost ex-

terminated both the ancient law and liberty of the subject, and a thousand other violences have been committed against the old constitution, so that the constitution we now have is either a new one, or the old one so totally defaced and mutilated as to be with difficulty recognized in our present situation ; and yet Mr. B. as in derision, is applauding our prosperous state under the old constitution, as though we still possessed it. The old constitution I make no doubt might have been improved as all which is the product of humanity may be meliorated, human nature producing nothing that is perfect ; but the old constitution has been totally vitiated, and our *prosperous* state is the consequence. Our present prosperous situation resembles that of a heedless country squire who has mortgaged the whole of his patrimony for nearly the value. The importunate tax-gatherer is never out of our houses, collecting money for the light of heaven, and diving into our pockets for the last solitary shilling, while water and air remain the almost only articles untaxed in the kingdom. We have a stupendous debt which can only be enumerated by hundreds of millions of pounds sterling ; the sum is so vast, that a tolerable arithmetician can hardly obtain a clear and distinct idea of it ; and the weight is

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so oppressive to the nation, that it rocks from one side to the other threatening “ hideous “ ruin,” not less agitated than *Ætna* when tortured by her convulsive fires: but we are not left comfortless, this national debt is paying off under this old constitution with a prospect as promising as that of employing an ant to carry away by atoms the rock of Gibraltar. We are so very prosperous that Spain alone and on her sole strength dares menace us without our giving the least provocation, put us to the charge of fitting out a great armament, and then in derision as our state is so prosperous leave us to bear all the expence of it. Part too of our prosperity according to this capricious and paradoxical writer must consist in our loss of America, which to say nothing farther supplied us with excellent sailors and soldiers, who to us are now no more, unless as adversaries. The flowing tide of this our prosperity has for some time past run so high that should it continue for the next half century, having no longer sufficient mounds to oppose it, we must be deluged. In short, I tremble for the guzzling down of this prosperity in such large and frequent draughts; I fear it must in the end intoxicate, and there is no answering for what men so intoxicated may not do.—These are  
some

some of the blessings derived to us under this old or new-fashioned constitution, for call it by what name you please, neither the fashion nor the effects of it are thereby altered or abated ; and whoever stiles this a state of prosperity has very different ideas of a state of prosperity from those which I entertain, and I should presume too from those of the rest of mankind. It presents us with a picture representing to our view a dissipating heir consuming with jollity and glee the last lonely guinea of the squandered inheritance, in defiance of that distress which must be the certain and inevitable consequence ; while an arch rogue who longs to partake of it, applauds the measure, and reminds him how long he has prospered by pursuing this practice.—As to the constitution I here determine nothing concerning it ; what I assert is this, If it be good, a very bad use must have been made of it to reduce us to the unprosperous state in which we now are ; and then, *Rebus autem afflētis cum patriam obsederi audisset, non quisivit ubi tuto viveret*, that is he sought not “ honours, distinctions, and emoluments,” to the gratification of his avarice or ambition, *sed unde praesidio posset esse civibus suis*.\*

*Consulte*

\* Nep. in vita Canonis.

*Consulite in medium, et rebus succurrite vestris.\**

There certainly is something wrong somewhere, egregiously wrong, as will be seen on the application of this concise statement in the words of Sallust: *Profectò virtus atque sapientia major in illis fuit, qui ex parvis opibus tantum imperium fecere, quàm in nobis qui ea bene parata vix retinemus.*† To what purpose then is trumpeted forth to us the encomium 'on "this old-fashioned constitution under which we have long prospered," unless it be to insult the senses and understandings of mankind!

Mr. B. with an air of superiority and contempt, asks "who now reads Bolingbroke?" "who ever read him through?"‡ And again, "I do not often quote Bolingbroke, nor have his works in general made any permanent impression on my mind. He is a presumptuous and superficial writer."§ I could wish this presumption and superficiality had rested there; but I find that men in point of literature, are like women in respect to beauty, blind to their own imperfections. I will frankly acknowledge I have read Bolingbroke through and

\* Virg. *Æn.* xi. v. 335. † Sal. *Bell. Cat.* ‡ P. 133.

§ P. 187.

and have been highly gratified, some of his works I have read more than once : and part of the knowledge he has communicated has made a deep and permanent impression on my mind. Amidst a great variety of instructive, and entertaining matter in many of his works, his letter to Sir William Windham appears to me excellent ; in that private history great light is thrown upon some important transactions of those times, not omitting those which preceded, and in the former of which he was no inconsiderable agent. Among many other interesting events, it exhibits a useful lesson in his own person of a wise man completely duped by a set of fools and knaves. The characters of Charles and James are finely contrasted, and though given by a few strokes are a master-piece in that kind of painting. I cannot refrain laying them before my reader with the introduction. “ The exile,” says he, “ of the royal family, under Cromwell’s usurpation, was the principal cause of all those misfortunes in which Britain has been involved, as well as of many of those which have happened to the rest of Europe, during more than half a century ”

“ The two brothers, Charles and James, became then infected with popery to such degrees,



“ grees, as their different characters admitted  
 “ of. Charles had parts; and his good under-  
 “ standing served as an antidote to repel the  
 “ poison. James, the simplest man of his time,  
 “ drank off the whole chalice. The poison  
 “ met, in his composition with all the fear, all  
 “ the credulity, and all the obstinacy of temper  
 “ proper to increase its virulence, and to  
 “ strengthen its effect—.”\* I do not conceive  
 that the person who writes in this stile is so de-  
 spicable a writer; but I am neither Boling-  
 broke’s critic, nor his second; he has his ble-  
 mishes and his beauties, but he who traduces  
 him as a writer mistakes his own way to literary  
 fame. I profess to know but little of men or  
 books; there appears to me to be no criterion  
 or standard to regulate and determine such judg-  
 ment, while we see one praises what another  
 condemns with equal plausibility. My own in-  
 ability is countenanced by that of others; and  
 as Mr. B. speaks freely of Bolingbroke, which  
 is but matter of opinion, I shall not hesitate to  
 take into consideration the abilities of the author  
 of that opinion, that we may know how far it  
 may be relied on. I have no doubt Mr. B. is  
 a great reader; he appears to me to have col-  
 Y lected

\* Bolingbroke, letter to Sir W. Windham, p. 288, 289.

lected and amassed from all quarters good and bad indiscriminately, a large mass of indigested matter, with which his mind is surcharged, and from which it labours at times to be relieved. Acquired without selection, retained without arrangement it forms a confused chaos; and instead of invigorating the mind, like an exuberance of flesh in the human body, tends only to render it more unweildy and fuller of humours. Hence that inequality so obvious in all he writes or speaks; hence strange doctrines, and still stranger conclusions; eccentric sentiments delivered in exaggerated, tortured, and distorted language, one while elevated and carried beyond the sublime into the bombast, at other times meanly creeping and licking the dust; metaphors injudiciously chosen, improperly applied, and sometimes disgusting from the unnecessary horror they convey, at other times from the offensive and indelicate ideas they excite; rancor wrapped up in foul language; affected pathos worked into puerility; petty antithesis apologizes for wit; a jingle of words is substituted for sense: all this, and much more, which certainly are not the characteristics of bright talents, are here to be found; they are the natural result of a plodding mind, long engaged in storing heaps of heterogeneous matter which  
it

it cannot assort, arrange, or select for use, as the exigency may require; nor can it be expected that purer or clearer streams should flow, till the rubbish which disturbs and pollutes the fountain-head is removed. Notwithstanding this, I make no question but Mr. B. conceives his production will acquire him literary fame, and I well know how such fame is frequently acquired; yet I cannot but observe, that to harrangue, and to write are two things very distinct; all who harrangue are not good writers, nor do all who harrangue much, speak or write well. Bolingbroke, whom he contemns, appears to me upon the whole to possess great merit, the knowledge he imparts on many subjects is highly instructive and interesting; he had an extensive understanding, and good judgment; and I apprehend he not only is read, but will be read and admired too for his strength of thought, glowing imagination, and unaffected, manly, nervous diction, with all its inaccuracies, when the letter on the French Revolution will sink off the public stage, and take refuge

*In vicum vendentem thus et odores,  
Et piper, et quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis;*

Hor. Ep. i. lib. 2.

even though gorgeously bound in red morocco.

This indignant spurning of Bolingbroke in his grave, reminds me of the fable of the ass kicking a dead lion, at whose voice, says the writer, when living he would have been panic-struck. The adage of Horace is certainly not amiss,

*Metiri se quemque suo modulo, ac pede, verum est.*

When I began, I proposed only giving some few animadversions on this letter; I have been insensibly induced to make many; I cannot therefore, consistently with that proposal, proceed farther. I might apprehend too, lest in the progress I should contract from my author a taint for vilifying, which I suspect is coming upon me, and by longer contact might prove irresistible. I shall therefore, after making one reflection, drop the pen.—If Mr. B. could have any the most distant idea that mankind paid ever so little deference to his opinion delivered in a publication, whatever he might privately communicate to a friend, he could not consistently with humanity have published this letter. For if only one half of the French nation had his abilities as a statesman or politician in any estimation, the constant repetition of degrading, vilifying and inflammatory passages directed against the principal persons who support the revolution; must inevitably have been  
productive

productive of such discord throughout that nation as would have been followed by the most tragical events. The scenes of confusion and horror might have been unutterable: It is however a consolation to all who rejoice not in those miseries which afflict mankind, in desolation, destruction, and death, to find that the good sense of that nation is not to be perverted by a composition teeming with rhapsody and wild enthusiasm, which has had no other effect on *their* understanding, than it has with the candid and rational among ourselves; and so far from operating with violence to their injury, has not as yet produced a bloody nose or a scratched face, but on the contrary, was received with pity as the effusion of a brain suffering under the distracting impulse of knight-errantry.

F I N I S.

*[The page contains faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]*







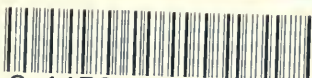


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